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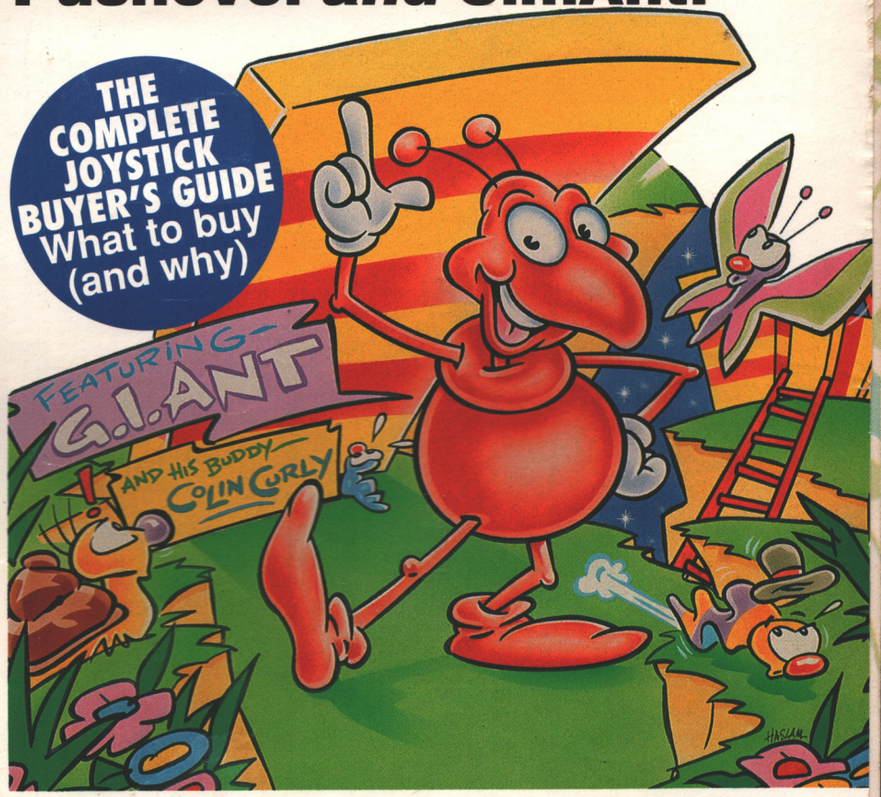

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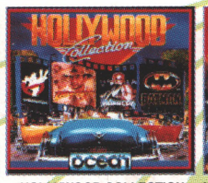

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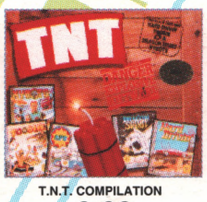

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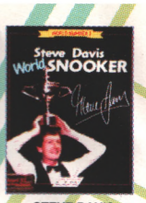

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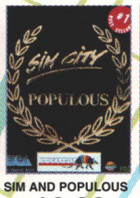

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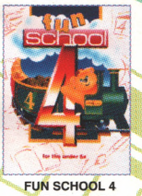

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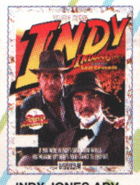

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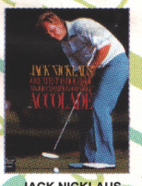

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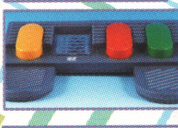

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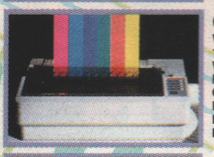

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AMIGA POWER

ISSUE 14 JUNE 1992

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A BIG 'HI' TO: Paul and Scott in Dundee, Evangeline in Barbados, Neil McGarrity in Copenhagen, Thea(?) and Kally and Poobelle' (??) *(It's a dog – Ed)* in Provence, Simon & Linda in Nottingham, Stavros Fasoulas in Finland, and anyone else who knows us!

NEXT MONTH IT BEGINS: What begins, you ask? 'Our reader of the month who we're going to run alongside our regular reviewers in Just Who Do We Think We Are?, of course!' we reply. We've already got a good selection of possibles, but – of course – there's always room for more. Remember: we need a nice portrait photo and lots of info on you and your games.

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10 TRUE STORIES
The A500Plus is no more – you read it first here! Plus: Whatever happened to Palace Software?; Win copies of Aliens: Special Edition with *Hostile Breed*; *The Rocketeer* zooms in; *James Pond* is back!; Captain Sensible joins Sensible Software; and more!

16 GALLUP CHART
Now sponsored by Penguin biscuits (!), but the Gallup charts haven't changed a jot – they're still the most reliable way of telling what's hot and what's not around...

49 COMPLETE CONTROL
If you're stuck on a game, your best hope of finding a way out is with Jonathan Davies and his Last Resort column – you'll find that here. Plus! Giant player's guides to *Shadowlands* and *Harlequin* and tips on *Pit-Fighter, Kick Off 2, Scooby & Scrappy Doo* and more!

66 STICK AROUND FOR JOY
It had to happen – AMIGA POWER does a joystick review feature. Separate the best from the rest here.

72 DIARY OF A GAME
This month Ubik really gets stuck into Sensible's up-coming *Mega lo Mania II* – he stops mucking around with menu systems and gets round to working on the game itself! Why not join him?

95 DO THE WRITE THING
More annoyed readers! The odd happy one! The case for wargames! A new way to play *Tetris*! It's all here...

99 THE BOTTOM LINE
It's back! – the most-packed-with-Amiga-games-information eight pages in the history of the world!

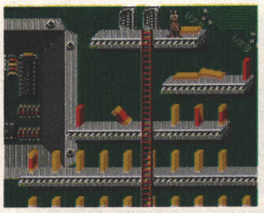
109 SUBSCRIBE! (ETC)
Get your brilliant value AMIGA POWER subscription here, plus back issues, T-shirts and – new! – benefit from great cheap game offers! Don't miss out!

GAMES OF THE MON

THE ADDAMS FAMILY
Console-style film-licence fun Page 20

JOHN BARNES EUROPEAN FOOTBALL
Son of *Man U* Page 24

FIRE & ICE
Braybrook's back – and in style too! Read all about it on... Page 26



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From nowhere – Ocean's Quavers tie-in, and it's good Page 32

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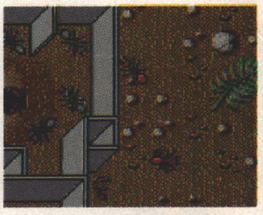
3D cartoon-style role playing – and it's *incredible* fun Page 34



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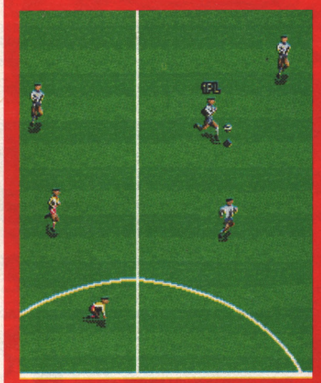
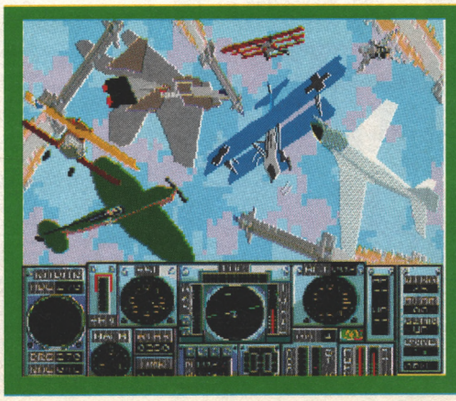
60 WHOLE NEW BALL GAME



Or, to be more precise, nine brand new ball games! Join Stuart Campbell for an in-depth look at the new footy games set to tie-in with the European Championships – can any of them halt the next-to-unstoppable rise of *Sensible Soccer*?

WIN! A HOLIDAY ON MOUNT ETNA!
Join Renegade for a prize you'll never forget! Page 89



90 DEFINITION OF SOUND: FLIGHT SIMS

We put it off for a while and then we ignored it for a bit and then we put it off some more, but its time had to come eventually. It's taken a massive four pages to even scratch the surface of the genre, but here, at last, is the definite buyer's guide to... flight sims!

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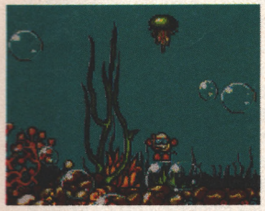
MONTH

DELIVERANCE
Bitmaps to sue? Doubt it, but this *does* look a tad familiar... Page 30



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A first – political skulduggery comes to the Amiga Page 42

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II
It's here – an all-time great is back! Page 44

112 POINTS OF VIEW
NEW! All our opinions on all the big games in potted, easy-to-read form!

114 AMIGA UNIVERSE
This issue, in our building-up-month-by-month-into-a-complete-encyclopaedia-to-all-Amiga-games-characters back page feature it's the king of them all – Dizzy!

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JUNE

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TWO DISKS!

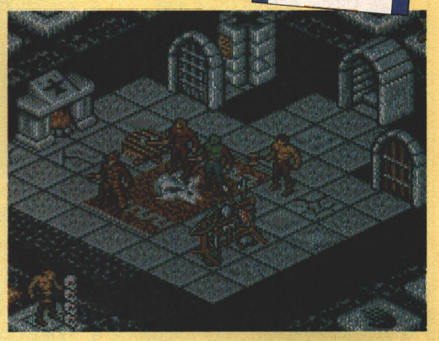
disk 14

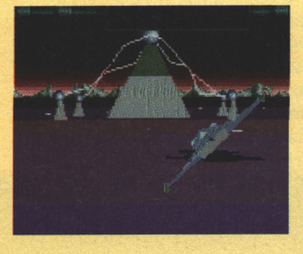
This month's double-disk special features a selection of top quality programs, the like of which you'll have rarely seen before. Plus! It also includes your chance to win an incredible free game!

AND THIS IS DISK 14

LEGEND

If you only come away from this issue of AMIGA POWER with one thing stuck in your mind, it'll probably be that *Legend* is a truly excellent game! Read the review (page 34) or play this brilliant demo – you'll get the message either way.





AQUAVENTURA

Trust Psygnosis to come up with a different sort of blaster. Whether you imagine this as a super-complicated *Galaxy Force*, an ultra-simple *Starglider* or a flying *Battlezone*, you've got to admit it's fun!

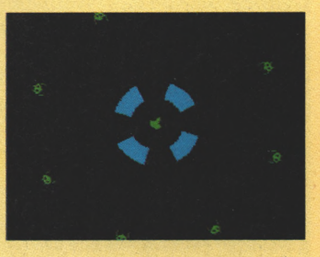
SPECIAL BONUS DISK!

MISTER & MISSIS

From the wonderful world of shareware – and if you don't know what that is, we've got a full explanation over the page – comes this excellent (and gigantic!) arcade adventure. Help 'Missis' rescue the captured 'Mister', with lightbulbs, teleports, glue-pits, locked doors, snooker balls (yes, really) and all sorts of other oddities getting tangled up in the plot along the way...

THE ATTACK OF THE GREEN SMELLY ALIENS FROM PLANET 27b/6

If you thought *Space Invaders* is *Space Invaders* is *Space Invaders*, think again. *The Attack Of The Green Smelly Aliens From Planet* (nearly there) *27b/6* shows there's an original twist on any story if you only think about it long enough...



GOT A FAULTY DISK?

What can we say? This *does* happen from time to time, but don't worry – we'll do our best to fix it for you. If your disk is damaged or fails to load, return it with a stamp addressed envelope to Tib plc, 36-50 Adelaide Street, Bradford BD9 0EA, who will replace it within a week of receipt. If, however, only part of your disk will not load we've got a Coverdisk Helpline. The number's over the page.

disk 14

LEGEND

Authors: Tag and Pete James
Publisher: Mindscape

OI! READ THIS FIRST

Except for *Mister & Missis*, this month's cover disks will work fine on all A500s, A500PLUSes and pretty much any other Amiga out there. *Mister & Missis* unfortunately requires one meg to run, but aside from that there should be no compatibility problems.

To use your excellent AMIGA POWER disks, follow these steps:

1. Make sure that you've switched off your Amiga, removed all peripherals, and plugged a joystick into Joystick Port Two and a mouse in Joystick Port One.

2. Insert the correct disk into your drive, and switch on your Amiga. After a short while, a menu will load. Press the appropriate function key, and the game will commence loading. Please be patient, particularly with *Legend*, which takes about five minutes to load.

3. Note that our PD bonus disk contains readable documents about the programs. These are also accesible by pressing the appropriate function keys on the main menu screen.

4. Please keep the disk in the drive at all times, and don't forget to switch your machine off for 20 seconds between disk swapping to prevent your AMIGA POWER disks from picking up any viruses.

A PROBLEM WITH YOUR DISK? SURELY NOT!

If either of your disks fails to work:

1. Try the whole process again, this time making sure you've removed every extra peripheral etc you've got attached to the machine.

2. If that doesn't work, try repairing the disk with Disk Doctor – supplied with your Amiga.

3. If you still aren't having any luck, then don't worry. Place the offending disk in a jiffy bag, along with an explanatory letter, saying WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE DISK and return it (complete with an SAE) to this address:
AMIGA POWER Disk 14 Returns, Tib Plc 36-50 Adelaide Street, Bradford, BD5 OEA. Give Tib a couple of weeks to replace your disk.

NEW! COVERDISK HELPLINE:

If only PART OF YOUR DISK will not load, call 0274 736990, and ask for Sam Hiah, Coverdisk Helpline. He'll do his best to help you out.
(Please don't send your cover disks to the AMIGA POWER offices – we are unlikely to be able to fix them, although they do make good projectiles for fights over who makes the next round of tea.)

This exclusive AMIGA POWER level of *Legend* will keep you playing into the early hours. And as if Mindscape weren't already being generous enough, they've arranged a special competition – check out the details on these here pages.

Sure, *Legend* is a 3D role-playing game, but it's quite unlike any other. The control system is probably the most user-friendly around (everything is mouse-controlled), and the spell-system is something else. Role-playing with real depth AND simplicity – what more could you ask for?

CUT DOWN THE TREES (WITH A FISH)

The quest (a visit to the artisan will explain exactly what it is) entails going down into the vaults with four characters (each with their own special abilities), exploring, solving puzzles and beating hell out of the nasties and mythical beasts.

The characters under your control are a barbarian (with the ability to go into a berserker rage), a bard (with the ability to play enchanted songs – different tunes have different magical properties), a thief (with the ability to hide in the shadows), and a runemaster (who can cast spells like nobody's business).

The game commences in the town, where there are four places to visit. Try all of them, find out what's on offer, and discover how to enter the vaults (ie begin the game proper). To return to a previous screen at any point, click on the X icon (this goes for all inventory displays also).

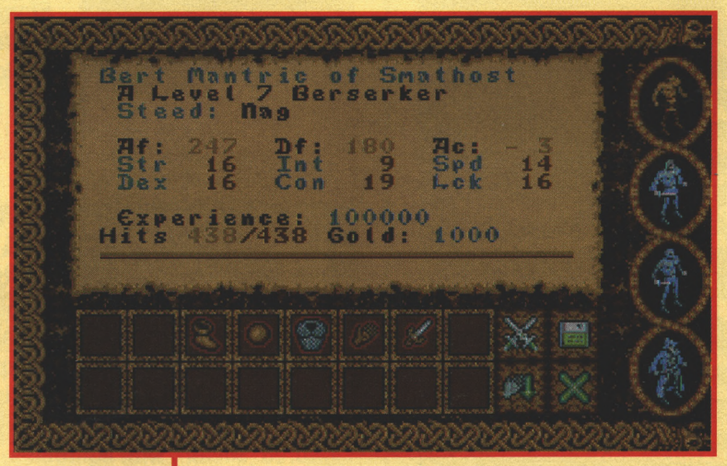
I OBJECT TO THIS

The next step is to learn how to ready any new weapons you may find along the way (your initial weapons are already placed in the characters' hands for you). It's easy: from the main screen, click on the backpack icon. An inventory of one of the characters will be displayed (ie the character highlighted at the right of the screen). Click on the weapon, then click on the crossed-swords icon (this equips the character with this object). Next, click on another character icon at the right, and repeat the process.

If you wish to pass objects between characters, simply click on the object, then on the character's icon to the right. Alternatively, if you wish to drop an object, click on it then click on the hand drop icon.

The next step is to manipulate things in the first dungeon room. Notice the row of commands below the main screen? Try clicking on the LOOK icon, then click on the table (always click on the base of an object or person). Next, try taking a peek in that chest behind the door. Click on the OPEN icon, click on the TAKE icon, then click on the chest. One of your characters will walk to the chest, open it, and take any treasure that's inside.

Next, try clicking on the dragon icon at the top left – a map will appear (not very extensive at the moment) – handy for



Left: The inventory screen (includes stats), as accessed by clicking on the bag icon.

Below: The main screen
1. The character selection and health portraits. More skulls equals more health, while colour indicates the level of luck. The selected character has a brown base.

2. The command icons. Click to activate, then click on an object if necessary.

3. The left and right hand (right for weapon, left for object), magic item and rally party icons.

4. The chicken. Click on here to retreat.

5. Click on the dragon to see the map.

FOR WHOM THE SPELL TOLLS

The power of the runemaster character shouldn't be underestimated. Provided he keeps at a safe distince during conflict, he can be the most powerful weapon of the party, sending fireballs of death flying all over the place (including straight at your own guys'n'gals if you aren't careful). Here's a quick summary of the spell icons used to hubble and bubble.

1. The spell scroll – displays spells mixed, gives an idea of their ingredients, and allows them to be trashed or topped up.
2. The dragon's eye – indcates which runes require which ingredients.
3. This row represents the ingredients on offer. The numbers below show supplies.
4. The spell equation line – shows what elements of the current spell are ready. By adding extra rune and ingredient mixes, a complex spell can be made.
5. The mixing bowl – ingredients and runes appear here when selected, ready to be mixed.
6. The rune table – ready for selection.
7. The mixing and tipping icons. To either add an element to the spell, or tip the current concoction away.

delving deeper into the game. Also notice the chicken icon – if things are getting desperate, clicking on this will make the party run as far and fast as possible (though getting chased into a dead end is a distinct possibility).

To switch between characters, simply click on their icons at the left of the main screen (notice the skulls – the number and colour represent the health of a character). Clicking on a different character will make a different special ability available (shown on the row of commands at the bottom). Walking between rooms is done simply by clicking on a doorway or open exit.

COWBOYS IN DUNGEONS

Right, that's pretty much it. Oops, nearly forgot to mention combat there. It's easy – to get a character to fight, simply click on his weapon hand, and away he goes. Clicking on the bloodied dagger icon will rally all your party, causing them to go into combat together.

RUNE WITH A VIEW

Eek, almost forgot about the spellcasting too. Now this is the doozy bit! If you're just starting out, you're probably best just trying out the spells already mixed up. They are actually represented by runes, so remembering what does what isn't always easy (be careful not to cast a heal spell on an enemy and a fireball on your own guys). Note that only the runemaster can cast and mix spells.

Clicking on the runemaster's mixing bowl will go to the spell mixing screen (which can also be used to identify spell elements – thus determining what their effect will be). See the FOR WHOM THE SPELL TOLLS box above for an idea of the icons we're describing here. To make a spell, it is necessary to add differing elements, ie director runes along with the appropriate ingredient, to determine whether they are missile, explosive or continuous (ie recast on a location every four seconds, until the party leaves the room, or it is dispelled). It is then necessary to add one or more effector runes along with their ingredients. Effectors include damage, paralyse, healing, thrall, and so on.

Clicking on the dragon's eye will indicate what ingredients are needed to go with a rune. The best way to find out exactly what a rune does is to examine the existing spells the runemaster has ready.

To do this, click on the spell list cloth. The list of spells will appear, with three icons to the right. The scroll icon indicates what runes and ingredients have been used to make the spell (ie the runes for a strong magic missile might be Missile, Damage, Damage, Damage). Clicking on the next icon, a bowl, will automatically create more of that spell (assuming the ingredients exist). The third icon is the skull and crossbones icon, which deletes a highlighted spell. Mixing different types of ingredients means that brand new spells can be invented.

AND IT'S GOODNIGHT FROM US

Finally (honestly), to actually mix the spells, click on a rune and its ingredient on the main mixing screen. Both symbols will appear next to the mixing bowl. Then click on the newly appeared rune – the runemaster will then mix the ingredients, and the rune will appear as part of the spell at the bottom of the screen. Repeat the process for the other parts of the spell, and then click on the mix icon at the right hand side of the screen. If the spell has been constructed correctly, then the new spell will be added to the runemaster's spell list. The bowl tipping icon lets you throw away any unsuccessful spell mixes.

The spell system sounds complex in theory, but a little practice should make perfect, and the effort is worth it. It's possible, for instance, to create a spell which with one click of the CAST SPELL icon heals the caster, paralyses anyone standing next to the caster, and fires magic missiles from the area around the casting. Powerful stuff, when you know what you're doing.

Of course the complete game is much bigger (frighteningly huge, in fact) and includes outdoor action too. It's available now, for the rather modest sum of £30.99. And check out Karl Foster's review in this very issue, why don'tcha? ●

WIN – YOUR OWN COPY OF LEGEND!

What could be better than your very own exclusive AMIGA POWER *Legend* dungeon? Yep, that's right a copy of the whole game, worth £30.99 from your local software emporium. Well, that's just what the generous bods at Mindscape are offering for the first ten readers who manage to complete our playable level of *Legend*. Simply write the password revealed at the end down on the back of an envelope, along with your name and address, and pop it in the post to Mindscape (NOT AMIGA POWER) at the following address:

AMIGA POWER LEGEND COMPETITION
Mr Ian Blackaller, Priority House, Charles Avenue, Maltings Park, Bergess Hill, West Sussex. RH15 9PQ

Good luck. And remember, only the FIRST TEN correct entries will win.

The first game screen in *Legend* – the town of Treihadwyl. From here it's possible to do a little shopping or go for divine assistance (it really does help you to pray *hard*).

Knee deep in violent bodies – thank goodness the beserker rage icon is on. Notice the running commentary below the icon bar, showing how much damage each side is doing.

disk 14

MISTER & MISSIS

AMIGA POWER SHAREWARE

Author: Richard Evans

Okay, kids. Listen up. This here game is not yer actual pure PD as such, rather it's shareware PD. The way it works is so: If you enjoy playing *Mister And Missis*, then why not help out programmer Richard Evans by sending him a small fee for his troubles. Yep, that's right – if you think *Mister & Missis* is worth paying for, then pop £3 in the post to Mr Evans, thus giving *him* a little reward for *your* enjoyment.

Of course you don't HAVE to send him any money, even if you do like the game. But you may write your own shareware game yourself one day, so put yourself in the programmer's position. And we're sure you'll agree, £3 for such excellent platform frenzy is top value.

So, if you're having fun and willing to help out a PD programmer, then send your payment of **£3** to **RICHARD EVANS, ST MARTINS ROAD, GOBOWEN, OSWESTRY, SHROPSHIRE, SY11 3N.**

Thank you, now on with the show.

How sad we all were when this turned out not, after all, to be a licence of the legendary Anglia (remember them?) TV series in which young and old married couples alike were humiliated before the nation for not knowing what their partner's favourite kind of marmalade was. Instead, programmer Richard Evans has come up with a neat platform puzzle game in which you play two characters, the eponymous Mister and Missis. Unfortunately, one of them (Mister) is stuck in a cage at the start, so you must negotiate Missis through zillions of screens of tricky platform-leaping puzzle-solving action to rescue her other half. That's about it, plot-wise, so let's go with some instructions.

Don't be fooled by the 'distinctive' graphics, this is a top-quality platform experience.

SOME INSTRUCTIONS

Mister and Missis are both controlled by joystick in the traditional manner, ie left, right, up and down, with up also acting as the jump function. Pressing fire switches control between Mister and Missis, which is vital as certain areas can only be passed by one or other of the two characters. Locked doors must be opened by Missis with the keys that only she can pick up, while Mister is the chap you want when there are lightbulbs to be switched on (we're not quite sure why you need to, to be honest, but do it anyway). If you want to light all the bulbs on a level in one go, though, you'll need to get both characters to the giant bulb icon which you'll come across occasionally.

SNOOKER LOOPY NUTS ARE WE

Secondary to the main task of rescuing your better half and escaping from the seven levels of the game, you'd also do well to play a little snooker along the way.

Eh? Well, throughout each stage you'll see lots of coloured balls. They are in fact snooker balls. Collect them in the right order (red, colour, red etc) and you'll get yourself a big juicy bonus, as well as making life a good bit easier for yourself when you come to battle the end-of-level guardian. *('End of level guardian?' – Reader's voice.)* Oh yes, we forgot to mention the end of level guardian. Unfortunately, it's a bit too late to tell you about him now, 'cos it's time for a quick icon guide.

A QUICK ICON GUIDE

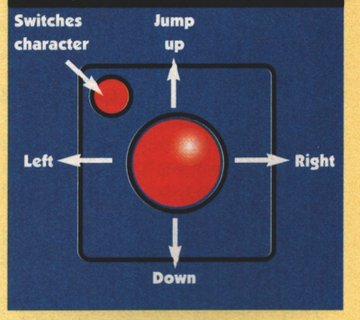
In addition to bulbs, keys and bulbs, you'll find a few other things scattered around the various worlds on your travels. Hearts increase your power level, while Venus flytraps decrease it at a horrific rate.

Springs, hooks, ropes and platforms all provide pretty predictable means of transportation, while teddy bears cause Mister and Missis to swap places. A snooker cue lets you collect the snooker balls in any order, and a snooker triangle restores the position of all the balls on a level. Glue pits stop you from jumping, and pretty much everything else gives you bonus points. That's it, basically. Um, good luck. *('No wait, don't go yet! What happens if we get stuck on a level?' – Reader's voice.)*

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET STUCK ON A LEVEL

If you get stuck on a level, press the left mouse button to restore that level to its starting set-up. Right, that's it this time. ●

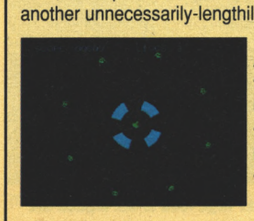
CONTROLS



THE ATTACK OF THE GREEN SMELLY ALIENS FROM PLANET 27b/6

Author: Alex May

Attentive readers will remember that back on issue nine's coverdisk we brought you *Mr Wobbly Leg Vs The Invaders From Space*, one of the entries for our issue two 'Win A Job At Bullfrog' competition (results coming really soon now, honest) in which you, our lovely and well-adjusted readers, had to design and write a variant on the classic *Space Invaders* game. Now, as a special treat, we bring you another unnecessarily-lengthily-titled entrant from that very same compo, in the shape of Alex May's *Attack Of The Green Smelly Aliens From Planet 27b/6* (or *Smelly Aliens* for short). This is one of our very favourite submissions for the competition, and – although we can't say for sure, since we're not ultimate judge Peter Molyneux – we wouldn't be at all surprised if it turned out to be the winner.

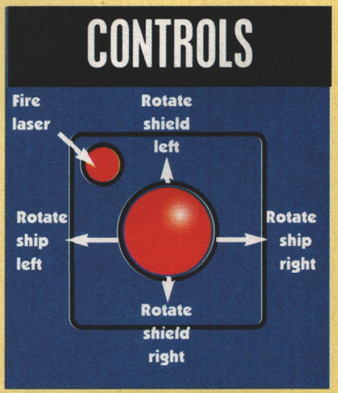


Aah! They're back, and they've invented the wheel!

The object of the game is as simple as it ever was – blast the invaders and score lots of points, and that's all – but this is a well-thought-out idea, and well-executed too. Your laser base sits in the centre of the screen with the defence shields arranged around it, rather than everything being across the bottom as before. The aliens attack in increasing numbers in circular patterns, and you rotate your ship in position and shoot at them through the gaps between your shields, which in this game are completely indestructable. You die if the aliens manage to get a laser blast through the same gaps, so if they fire where there's a space, you must rotate the shields around so that they block the oncoming shot.

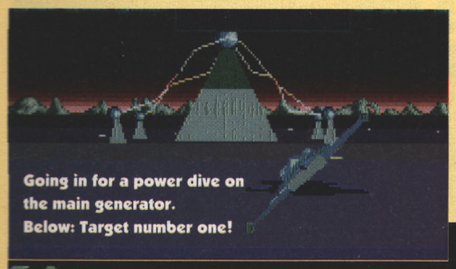
And that's all there is to it. As classically simple as the first *Space Invaders*, and identifiably related to it, yet an original and cleverly-designed arcade game in its own right, we think you'll like this one. To be honest, it does work best if you've got a one meg machine which can access the groovy music, but – hey! – we're sure you can supply some kind of sound yourself if you don't. ●

CONTROLS

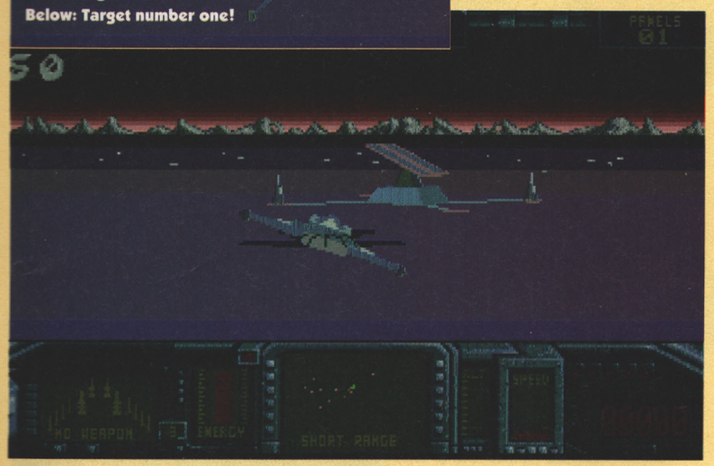


AQUAVENTURA

Author: Bill Pullan
Publisher: Psygnosis



Going in for a power dive on the main generator.
Below: Target number one!



It's Serious Challenge time in AMIGA POWER again, folks. Our *Aquaventura* demo, courtesy of those nice Psygnosis people, brings you the game's first mission to complete. Nothing too hard in that, you might think, but there's a difference – now you have to do it in 60 seconds. Yup, just one minute after you press fire to begin the game, it'll all be over, whether you succeeded or not, so get your no-nonsense shooting gloves on and get ready for some blasting. The game itself couldn't be simpler – fly around using the joystick and blast everything you see which fits into one of the categories listed below.

TARGET CATEGORIES

Things which move. Everything else.

IS IT THAT SIMPLE?

Yes, it's that simple.

ANY OTHER CONTROLS?

Well, okay, to be strictly accurate there are a couple of other things you might want to know. One is that you can switch your gun sights on or off by pressing the 'S' key (actually these are horribly confusing and we suggest you leave them off), another is that you can alter your craft's velocity by using keys F1 to F10 (F10 being the fastest speed), and the last one is that you can pause the game with the 'P' key. Any more questions?!

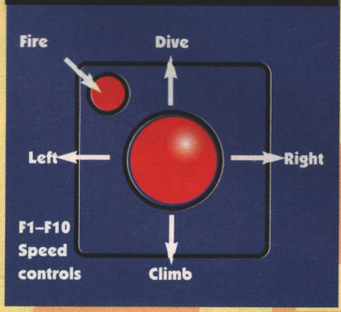
SHOOT WHAT? WHEN?

Watch the intro. But don't hang around, you haven't got time to blast everything...

HEY A500P OWNERS!

Apologies and all that, but DON'T leave the game running on the rolling demo and then try to play – you won't be able to, as the Hi-Score table crashes the program. You'll have to reload it to play if you do. Sorry for the inconvenience.●

CONTROLS



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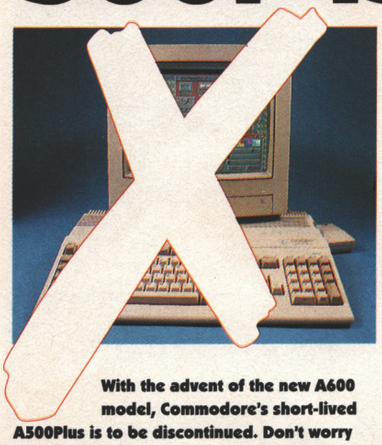
TRUE STORIES

SHOCK NEWS! THE AMIGA 500P IS DEAD



With the advent of the new A600 model, Commodore's short-lived A500Plus is to be discontinued. Don't worry though, for those who would rather buy the old model, stocks are expected to last until late this year.

It was only launched about six months ago, but now the A500 Plus proves itself to be very much an interim machine, with Commodore planning to phase it out in time for Christmas in favour of the new A600 models. The A500 Plus is still on sale of course – and will be for some time – but sourses close to the company tell us that manufacture has already ceased, presumably freeing production lines to work exclusively the new basic machine.

The Commodore Amiga of the future, then, is without doubt the A600. This currently comes in two models, the basic one meg one at £399 and the version with a 20 Mb hard drive fitted internally for £100 more at £499. However, you should by no means dismiss the idea of buying an A500 even now – there're likely to be some great discount opportunities to be had in the months ahead.

RESPRAY 'RESTING'

In one of your idler moments you may just get around to wondering 'Whatever happened to Respray – Domark's budget label?' The truth is, it's not dead – not as such – just in a period of extended rest, with Domark back catalogue stuff currently going out on Ocean's Hit Squad label instead.

TOUCHDOWN! TOUCHES DOWN

Fans of the Monopoly Commission needn't worry too much about Ocean getting the re-release market all to themselves though – rival software house Empire are just about to launch one of their very own! Welcome, then, to trendily-American-Football-styled Touchdown! Long may you stick out year-old games for eight quid(ish).

HIT SQUAD 'EDUCATIONAL'!!

Meanwhile, fans of The Hit Squad will be pleased to know that Ocean are about to start launching educational(!) products on their budgie label. The fun begins with *Fun School 2*. 'The time is right to publish some educational titles on Hit Squad,' reckons Ocean's Paul Patterson. Yeah, right...

YEAR OF THE AQUA OLYMPICS

The old *Pond* – wait'll you see the new model!

Before the eagerly awaited *Splash Gordon* – the third *James Pond* console-style extravaganza – comes the first of a brand new style of *Pond* adventure, and one ideally suited for this summer (it is Olympic year, after all). Bringing with it, as it does, happy memories of those great multi-event sports games of years past, this very 'unoffishal' Olympic 'licence' from cheeky Millennium – *The Offishal Aquabatic Games* – features the underwater agents of FI5H on a misson to get themselves fit so they're in fine fettle to take on the dastardly Dr Maybe. We can hardly wait...

And that's not all from Millennium! *Daughter Of The Serpents* is a graphic adventure set in 1920s Egypt for October release, while *Rome* (no relation to our recent covermounted PD game!) is Steven Grand's sequel to his earlier *Robin Hood*. You start out as a humble slave and have to try and make your way up through the ranks until you reach the dizzy heights of Emperor. A much larger, more ambitious game than *Robin Hood*, expect to see a September release.

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? ETC

Plenty of planes, but where's our hero of the hour – the Rocketeer?

It's probably fair to say Disney hasn't quite realised it's potential game-wise yet, but it's not for a lack of trying. One of the few software houses (Lucasfilm is the only other we can think of) to get their film licences built-in, Disney lead with a new adventure-game version of *Dick Tracy* from the USA (let's hope it's better than the Empire version). Following that is *The Rocketeer* (just out on the PC, due on the Amiga in September) featuring '30s racing planes, experimental rocket packs and vicious nasties – imagine Cinemaware's *Rocket Ranger* transformed into a scrolling blaster and you'll be most of the way there. Keep watching the skies!

WHEREVER HUGO, I GO TOO...

Cheeky Hugo in not-PD-at-all shocker!

Or: The strange case of *Skaermtrolden Hugo*. Seems the loveable *Skaermtrolden Hugo* (PD, issue 12) *was* too good to be true for the Public Domain after all. The Danish software house who created it are mightily surprised to see their baby doing the PD circuit in the UK – they spotted the review in AMIGA POWER – especially since they were making enquiries into releasing it commercially in this country themselves. We'll keep you posted on what happens next, but don't expect to pick up the game through the Public Domain in the near future.

HE SAID 'CAPTAIN', I SAID 'WOT?'

Here's one of those stories that sounds too good to be true, but – apparently – is. Seems top pop star Captain Sensible is a bit of a computer game and, no doubt, soccer fan, so what should he do on hearing of Renegade's upcoming release *Sensible Soccer* but ring them up asking to do the music? And now he is. And here's a pic to prove it. Er, hurrah?

THE SHOW MUST GO ON...

More computer shows! The Electronic Games Show is held at Wembley Exhibition centre on November 13-15th and plans to feature 'mountain bike and skateboard circuits' as well as all the normal computer stuff. Well!

...AND ON

If you can't wait that long, though, there's always Arcadia at Alexander Palace (August 8th-10th). In case you're wondering, no, this isn't an exhibition as such – with stands taken by the software houses – but rather a large-scale temporary games arcade, featuring games championships, celebrity challenges and the like. Mmm, you might just catch the AMIGA POWER team down there too...

EDUCATIONAL (BUT FUN)

The gap between educational and serious software is narrowing all the time – witness games like *SimAnt* or Disney's *Mickey Mouse* educational things – but rarely has the distinction been so blurred as it is with Activision's *Bushbuck*, a sort of Indiana Jones-type search for rare and wonderful historic artefacts crossed with a travelogue of famous geographical landmarks. Full review next issue.

SICK OF FOOTY?

Don't worry, you will be. Just out is US Gold's *The Lineker Collection*, a Kixx special featuring *Italy 1990*, *Hot Shot*, *Footballer Of The Year II* and *International Soccer Challenge*, all together in one box for £19.99.

SICK OF FOOTY? PART TWO

Sooner or later every First Division football team is going to have its own game – or so it seems. Joining *Liverpool* and *Man U* comes *Arsenal FC* from Thalamus, an arcade/management thing. Originally intended for Easter, things seem to be slipping – Gunners fans shouldn't really expect it until late summer.

WIN FIVE COPIES OF ALIENS – THE SPECIAL EDITION!

PLUS 10 COPIES OF HOSTILE BREED!

COMPETITION

Palace's brand new multi-screen space station defend-'em-up *Hostile Breed* is nearly upon us – see review next issue – and to celebrate we've got ten copies of the game to give away. That's not all though – as those who've read the headline above will know. Y'see, for the first five winners pulled out of the hat we've also got five copies of the video Aliens: The Special Edition – and all you have to do is answer these simple questions.

1) *Hostile Breed* artist Jo Walker also worked on what previous Palace game?

a) *Demoniak*
b) *Rim Runner*
c) *Barbarian II*

COMPETITION

2) Aliens: The Special Edition is how much longer than the original version?

a) Five minutes
b) 17 minutes
c) 40 minutes

Easy, yes? Now simply write your answers down on the back of a postcard or envelope and send it off (along with your own name and address, of course) to 'Top Breeders Recommend It' Competition, AMIGA POWER, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. Closing date is June 30th, so hurry, hurry, hurry...

CRIB SHEETS

UBI SOFT

Contact: Ubi Soft, Saddlers House,100, Reading Road, Yately, Camberley Surrey GU17 7RX.

History: Founded in 1986 as a software publisher by Yves Guillemot, the company's long standing chairman, Ubi Soft is part of a larger group including one of Europe's biggest games distributors. With offices in Germany, America, the UK (established September 1990), France – and a joint venture in Japan – they're truly an international concern too.

People: Ubi Soft employs around 50 people full time in France, though in the UK there are only two. All design and conception of software takes place in Paris, with about 20 people directly involved in software development, and a number of the programmers working in-house. However, Ubi Soft have recently worked with outside developers like the German Bluebyte, perhaps best known for *Battle Isle* and *Pro Tennis Tour 1* and *2* – and who are now publishing games like *Apidya* directly into the UK themselves – and Computer's Dream, the team behind the *BAT* games.

Greatest Success: In the opinion of Rozenn Leard, Ubi Soft's UK Operations and Marketing Mamager, "it would have to be *Pro Tennis Tour* by Bluebyte, because it was our first big success. It was the one that really created our reputation as a publisher in France and abroad."

Greatest Failure: "That would have to be *Iron Lord*. In fact, that *would* have been a big success if it had been on time, but unfortunately it took ages to finish, and we found other games had left it behind by the time it came out. It was a real shame."

Typical Game: "There isn't really any such thing, though we always try to produce games that'll appeal to as many people as possible. *BAT*, for example, was always intended to be the sort of adventure-type game that anyone could get into. We didn't want it to be played by the select RPG gaming few and no-one else."

How they see themselves: "We're a major publisher in France, of course, and I think we're building a pretty good reputation in the UK too. Building a rep all over the world is our priority – though we're now recognising each country needs a different approach."

How do other people see them: "I think that others in the industry are now aware of us as a dynamic and capable publisher."

Product development: "When a programming team brings a concept to us and we accept it, we're keen to stay in very close contact with them right the way through development, doing what we can to improve the game. The other way to do it is that we come up with the scenario and the stucture of a product ourselves and then farm it out to a programming team – we keep even closer tabs on those ones!"

Final Word: "It's simple. We are determined to continue the production and distribution of quality software."

***BAT 2* – still on the horizon from Ubi Soft. Let's hope it's worth the wait...**

VIRGIN ON THE ECLECTIC

Indeed, you *could* argue they don't just verge on it, they actually deliberately make a point of releasing the weirdest mix of games you ever did see. One minute they'll come up with something shallow and funny like *Viz*, the next a state-of-the-art text adventure like *Wonderland*, the next something completely different again. Who else would sign a *Motorhead* licence, for instance? (Though goodness knows what's happened to that.) And who else would have a summer line-up as diverse as this...?

ROOKIES

3D gungo ho heroics in the explosive *Rookies*.

Not unlike Sensible's *Cannon Fodder* in many ways, *Rookies* is a 3D isometric wargame-with-god-sim-pretentions, if you can imagine that. Created by programmers Perfect Set, it aims to recreate the sort of fun you get playing with Action Men or toy soldiers (or Paintball, for that matter) – but on a computer. Look for an autumn release.

REACH FOR THE SKIES

Here at AMIGA POWER we've always been big fans of period flight sims, so this new WW2 effort from Rowan – the team behind *Falcon* – is eagerly awaited. It puts you in the role of pilot (British or German) or air controller during the Battle Of Britain and lets you get on with it. Again, scheduled for an autumn release.

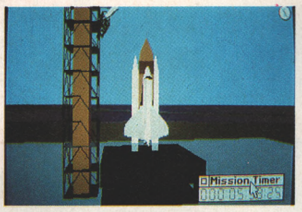
ARCHER McCLEAN'S POOL

Archer Mclean gives his balls a bit of a re-spray (ahem) for Virgin's next big release.

The new, American-friendly version of the ultra-successful *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, as put together by the multi-talented Archer Mclean and featuring just about every game variation known to man. Look for a review very soon.

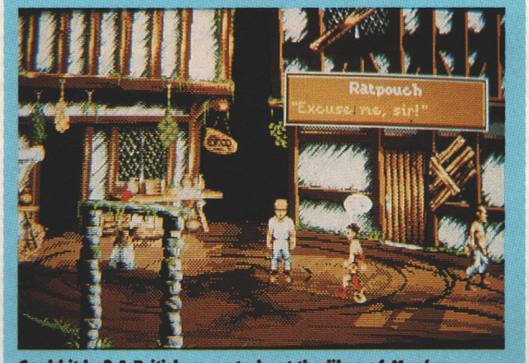
SHUTTLE

Gigantic, massively complex and determinedly completist simulation of the American Space Shuttle, put together by top 3D specialists Vektor Grafix. Release date to be confirrmed.



In space no-one can hear you press the wrong button – but you've got to get up there first!

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS



Could it be? A British game to beat the likes of *Monkey Island*? Find out in next month's AMIGA POWER...

Created by Revolution Software, this full-scale mouse-driven FRP adventure – apparently created with visual help from Watchmen comic artist Dave Gibbons – is set to rival the best the Americans can offer. Look for a £30.99 release very soon.

FABLES & FIENDS: THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA

From Westwood Associates (the *Eye Of The Beholder* developers) comes this strange cross between normal Fantasy Role Playing games and interactive graphic adventures. It lacks weapons (completely) and features limited spell-casting, concentrating instead on a fairy-tale atmosphere, character interaction and all that jazz. Sounds very promising indeed – look for a (guess what?) autumn release for this too.

MEANWHILE...

Sensible's *Cannon Fodder* – visually a sort of cross between *Mega lo Mania* and *Commando*, which we first showed you back in AP11 – has just been signed up for release a bit later this year by Virgin too! Worth a 'hurrah', do you think? *(Oh, go on – Ed)* Hurrah!

ECTS THE AWARD WINNERS

A couple of months ago (AP12, back issue fans) we gave you a list of nominations for the European Computer Trade Show 1992 Awards – the self-styled games industry Oscars. Well, now we can tell you who won! Nominations were made by journalists from 50 magazines across Europe (including AMIGA POWER, of course), and the awards presented by Gamesmaster's Dominik Diamond. Here are the winners in the various Amiga-relevant categories...

Best Action Game: *Lotus Turbo Challenge II* (Gremlin)
Best Sports Game: *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* (Virgin)
Best Adventure/Role Playing Game: *Eye Of The Beholder* (SSI/US Gold)
Best Simulation: *Railroad Tycoon* (MicroProse)
Best Packaging: *3D Construction Kit* (Incentive/Domark)
Best CD Game: *Sim City* (Maxis/Infogrames)
Software Publisher Of The Year: MicroProse
Game Of The Year: *Lemmings* (Psygnosis)

The only computer game to win any significant awards which *hasn't* appeared on the Amiga is Origin's *Wing Commander II*, which swept the Best Sound and Best Graphics awards, while – for us, anyway – the big surprise was the complete non-appearance of MicroProse's *Formula One Grand Prix* by Sir Geoff Crammond. Maybe next year, eh?

WILL WE EVER SEE A SEXY WARGAME?

***The Perfect General* in all its green'n'brown glory. It may be the *Perfect General*, but is it the Perfect Wargame? Can it match up to *Battle Isle*? Find out next month...**

Well, lots of people keep trying to come up with them, don't they, but we have to say we still harbour severe doubts about whether it can really be done. Still, if anybody can manage it, Ubi Soft can – their brilliant *Battle Isle* and *Celtic Legends* releases did interesting things with the hex-based format, and now, with *The Perfect General*, they're tackling the subject head on. Actually developed for them in America by the as-yet-unknown-over-here outfit QQP, we still don't know too much about the details. Review next month though...

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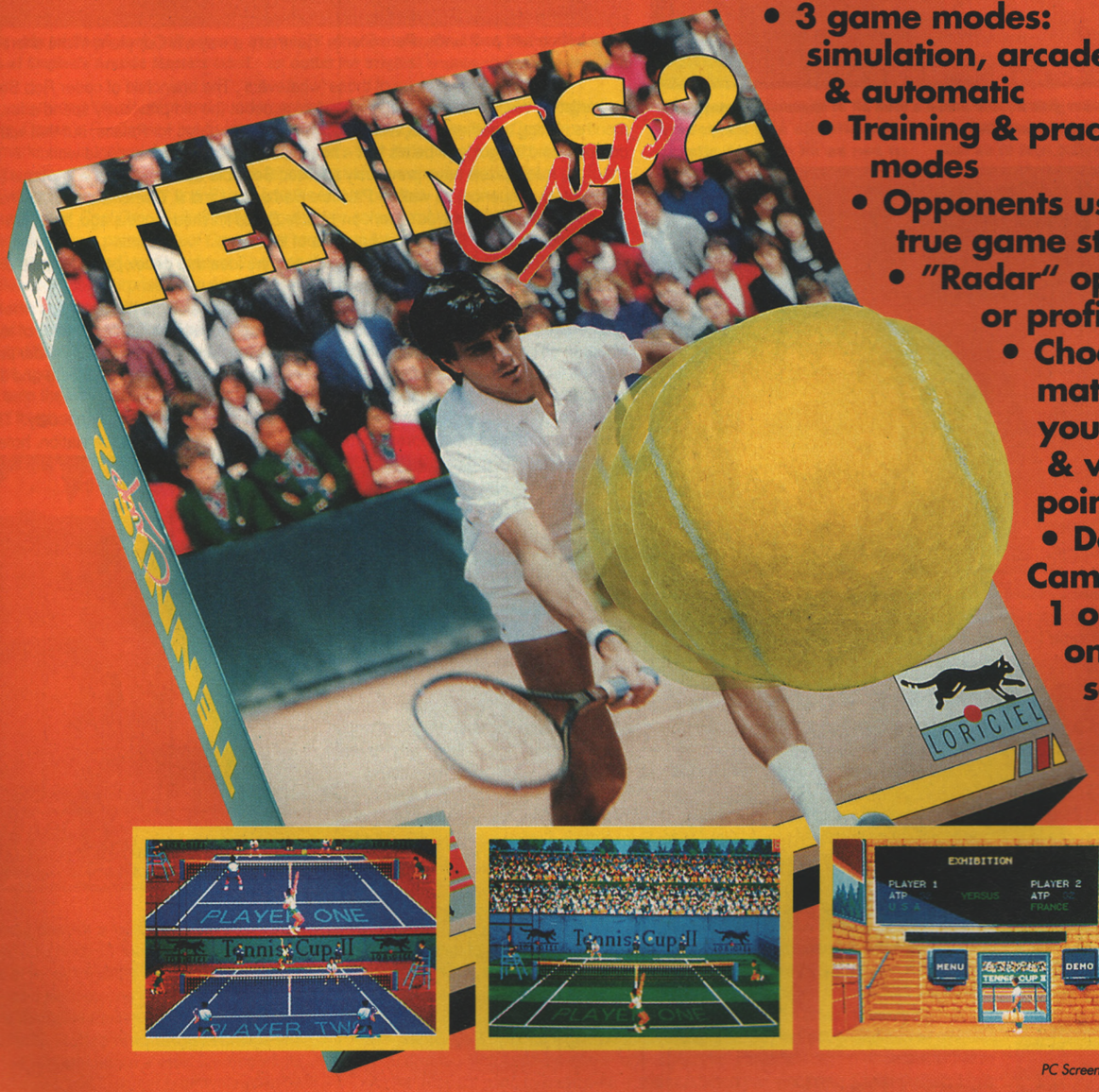
PLAY THE ACE

TENNIS Cup 2

FROM THE DESIGNERS OF THE SMASH HIT TENNIS CUP



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LORICIEL

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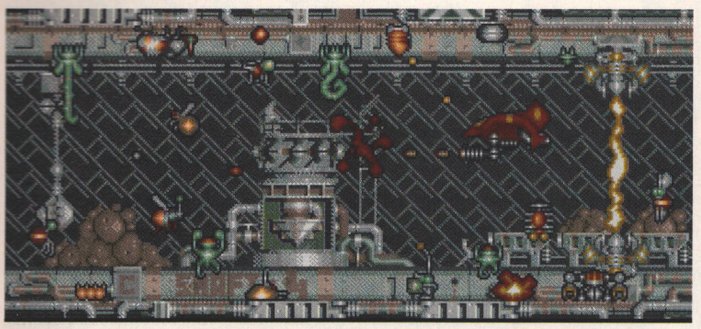
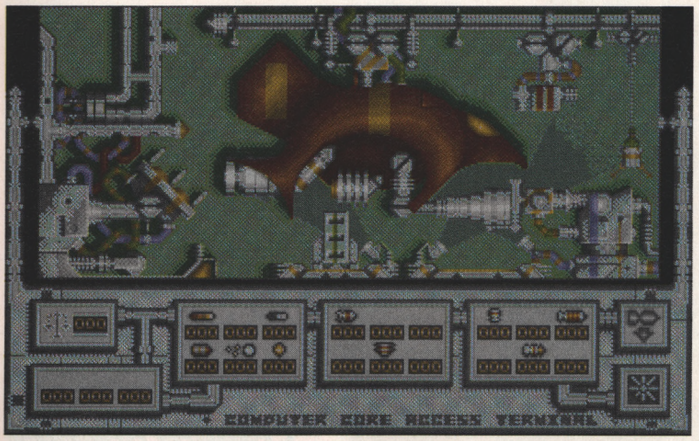
WHERE ARE THEY NOW? No1 PALACE SOFTWARE

BY GARY PENN



Jo Walker's distinctive graphics give *Hostile Breed* a look all of its own. You may remember his intro sequence in the excellent *Mega lo Mania*.



In *Hostile Breed*, extra weapons – missiles etc – are collected by completing a simple sub-game accessed via the space station spokes (see main text). The components must then be brought here, to a hangar inside the base, and bolted onto your craft.

Actually, Palace Software are alive and well and still working away across the road from their old haunt, the Scala Cinema. They'd be the first to admit that they have never been top of the heap, but the company's always proved itself an invaluable spice in the rack that is entertainment software.

While there's been little obvious activity from the Palace people since they released *Demoniak* over a year ago, a lot's been going on behind the scenes. They've been bought up by French publisher Titus, but more importantly (to us) they've been working on products – the blaster *Hostile Breed* is set for release next month, while they're also busy revitalising two old favourites, *Super Barbarian* and *Super Cauldron*. And then there's the so-new-it-can't-to-be-discussed-yet *Jekyll And Hyde*.

"I suppose in the long-term we're moving towards CD-based product," says Palace King and co-founder Pete Stone. "But that's a way off. Our plans in the short-term are... whatever."

Hostile Breed is one of those 'whatevers'. The brainchild of coder Rob Stevens and artist Jo Walker, it represents Rob's Amiga debut (he did previously spend a few months putting together a HG Wells-ian *Time Machine* game for Palace, but that was dropped) and it's going to be his last – he's recently moved on to console work.

Jo's pixels have previously adorned Sensible Software's *Mega lo Mania* (the introductory sequence) as well as Palace's *Barbarian I* and *II*, *Demoniak*, and *Sliders* ("the one good screen"). Since Jo's work on *Hostile Breed* finished months ago, he's now firmly ensconced on *Super Barbarian* – but more of that later.

It was in October 1990 that Rob had the idea that developed in *Hostile Breed* – he wanted to create a modern version of *Defender*.

"Well, a similar sort of thing," he explains. "I'm sick of shoot-'em-ups where all you get are bigger and bigger weapons and fixed sprite patterns so it's a matter of learning where to sit on the screen. I hate that. Intelligent aliens are more fun, as *Defender* proved."

In an attempt to make *Hostile Breed* stand out from the crowd, Rob and Jo are incorporating more than just intelligent aliens.

"There are eight levels," says Rob, "but you play them simultaneously." These horizontal-scrolling levels represent the spokes of a planet-based space station, holed by an earthquake (!) and now home to aliens pouring in by the shuttle-load. The aim is simply to kill the aliens and plug up the holes to win, but there's more to it than that...

"Everything in the station's powered by a reactor and it all works properly. You have these repair robots which you build and then send out to repair the cracks in the base and any cables that have been eaten away. They get attacked, a bit like the Humanoids in *Defender*, and you have to rescue them."

So there's the base to run, droids to build and protect, and sexually active aliens to kill. Yes – when the little blighters aren't going for the player, they are going for 'it', and it's not uncommon to see many different alien life-cycles all buzzing around at once!

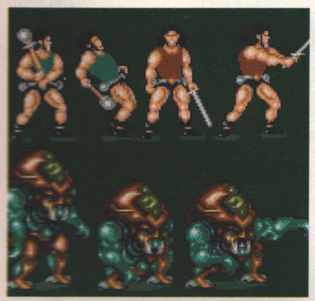
Indeed, there are 78 different aliens and 24 plants, which all told amounts to 590 stages of evolution in all. "One half of them usually attack you, while the other half do their own thing," Rob reveals. "Having said that, almost all of them go for the internal workings of the base though."

The boys' strange ideas came from a variety of sources, including books, beer, the box (natural history programs in particular), and films. Their fave rave is *Blood Money* of all things. "It played well," says Rob. *Hostile Breed* should be released by the time you read this and is reviewed in the next issue of AMIGA POWER.

POWER MAD

Much more of an obvious arcade game than recent things like *Psyborg*, Loriciels newie *Jim Power In Mutant Planet* is a scrolling half shoot-'em-up/ half beat-'em-up affair, not unlike recent releases from the *Leander/Borobodur* school of arcade style games. Here's a quick taster screen – full review next issue.

● More games to come from Loriciels over the summer include *Bizzy Bros*, a *Lemmings*-style game based on gold digging (!), *The Cartoons*, featuring two very different creatures who mutually depend upon each other to survive (sounding very much like an updated *Head Over Heels*) and – yes! – *Baby Jo II*!



Where are these sprites from? *Super Barbarian*, of course...!

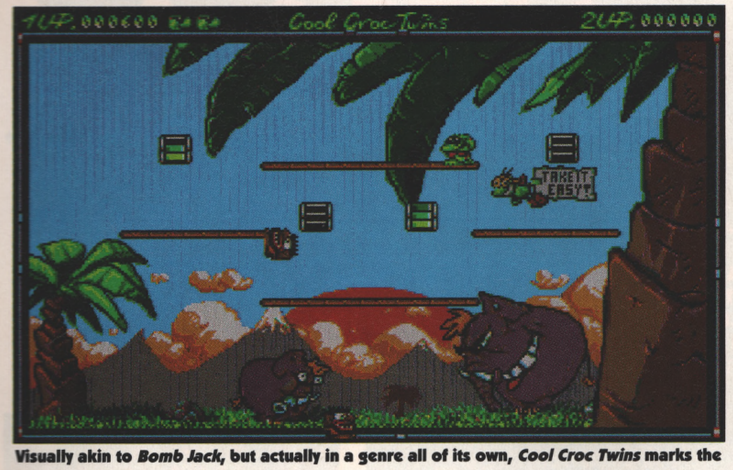
SUPER, SMASHING, LOVELY

The *Supers* – *Barbarian* and *Cauldron* – are less imminent. Both of them are intended for release next year. In *Super Barbarian*, Maria Whittaker's nowhere to be seen – but that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of choice chicks to rescue from the clutches of evil Drax, who's back yet again.

"We're combining the best of the two previous *Barbarians*," says Pete Stone. The result is two beat-'n'-hack-'n'-slash-'em-ups in one: a one-on-one knockout with up to eight players taking part (only two combatants are on-screen at once though), and an action arcade adventure. *Super Barbarian* is in the hands of ex-Gang Of Five coder Dave Chapman (he did *Sorcery* many years ago) – or Dr Dave as the Palace team used to call him, because he "always seemed to be rescuing other programmers' 'failures'".

Super Cauldron, on the other hand, is being put together by Titus in France, but will be released on the Palace label (the main witch character is their creation, after all). If things go to plan, she'll return in a run-'n'-jump-'n'-shoot-'n'-spell-icious romp, only this time around she needs to be rescued from an evil King. You play her daughter, you see, who's a jollier, more cartoon-esque soul in keeping with the style set by Titus' *The Blues Brothers* and *Titus The Fox*. More news in future issues.

CROC TILL YOU DROP



Visually akin to *Bomb Jack*, but actually in a genre all of its own, *Cool Croc Twins* marks the launch of Empire's Arcade Masters label – an outlet for original arcade-style products.

Everyone's mixing the platform and puzzle game genres together these days – Mirage's *Humans*, Ocean's *Pushover* – but here's a rather different way to handle it. *Cool Croc Twins* marks the launch of Arcade Masters – Empire's new sister label – which, as the title suggests, will concentrate on original arcade style games, leaving the mainstream company to deal with the *Megatraveller* and *Pacific Islands* sort of product.

But what of *Cool Croc Twins*? Following a single screen, multi-level, one or two simultaneous player pattern, *Cool Croc Twins* requires a lot more brainpower than the screenshots might lead you to believe. The storyline concerns two incredibly, well, 'cool' crocodiles (surprise, surprise) who are vying for the affections of (oh dear) one Daisy Croc-et. This involves competing in increasingly more cluttered and complex play areas.

Each screen is composed with a myriad of platforms, outer walls, lethal-but-cute aliens, and tiles. Wandering around the outer walls, the crocs can bounce, clinging onto platforms and nutting the tiles – thus changing their colour. Change the colour of all the tiles and its onto the next screen. Simple to explain, pleasingly *Bubble Bobble*-esque (well, sort of...) but tough and quirky with it – *Cool Croc Twins* will be available in a couple of weeks.

FTL JOIN PSYGNOSIS

The death of Mirrorsoft still seems to be at the root of every other story we hear these days, the latest being that respected American publisher FTL – the people behind seminal RPG *Dungeon Master* amongst others – is now to be handled in the UK by Psygnosis. We await news of new products – perhaps a *DM3*? – with interest...

STUCK ON KNIGHTMARE?

We're not surprised – it's a very tricky game. Happily, help is at hand. Help in the form of an 'Adventurers Handbook', containing all the information you're going to need to complete the game – though presented in a slightly cryptic fashion so as not to make it too easy. For a small black and white magazine-like thing, £5.99 (from software stores or Mindscape on 0444 246333) may sound a bit steep, but if you're really determined to finish the game, where else are you going to go...?

UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD

***Ashes: Midwinter* fans should be right at home.**

Ashes Of Empire, the new Mike Singleton extravaganza (see news last issue), is nearing release – we hope for a review next issue. In the meantime, here's a quick gander at what it looks like – *Midwinter* fans should be in their element, though the game scenario (loosely based, as it is, on real life events in the crumbling Sovier Union) promises to be rather more sophisticated than stuff we've seen before.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

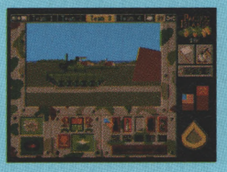
After another month of intense game-playing (it's a dirty job, but you know the story), here're our six faves from last month's releases. Check 'em out, already.

APIDYA (Play Byte)

Arguments go on in the AMIGA POWER office – still! – over whether this or *R-Type II* is actually the best Amiga shoot-'em-up ever. And no doubt the argument will continue to rage for quite some time. What's for sure, though, is that it's most definitely in the top two, and if that's not reason enough to buy this beautiful, addictive, varied and sonically astonishing little slice of Software Heaven, then we don't know what is.

AGONY (Psygnosis)

A 'relaxing' horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up might sound like a contradiction in terms (or indeed just a very bad idea), but give this curious little oddity from Psygnosis a try and you might just change your mind. Gorgeous to look at, and with an intro tune you could frame (if you'll pardon the mixed metaphor), this is a game that's also surprisingly enjoyable to play. Mellower than the entire Pink Floyd collection.

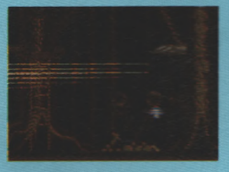


PACIFIC ISLANDS (Empire)

Tank games aren't for everybody, but if you're one of those people (as the saying goes) to whom they *do* appeal, you couldn't do much better than to try Empire's latest offering for size. Actually much more action-orientated than you might expect, *Pacific Islands* wallows in a claustrophobic atmosphere. Boasting lots to do, fine presentation and oodles of room for experimentation, this is a game to last you right through the year.

ULTIMA VI (Mindscape)

A bit too hardcore for newcomers to fantasy role playing games it might be, but if you're a fan, *Ultima VI* remains the biggest, deepest offering in the genre yet. You get the best in exploration, combat, character interaction and humour – all in one game. It could still do with better graphics (and a bit more speed), but then, that's American Amiga programmers for you. Probably the best value game you'll ever buy.



ANARCHY (Sizzlers)

Yet another blaster beginning with the letter 'A', we're afraid, but very different to the other two. *Anarchy* is an update of the classic (and firm AMIGA POWER fave) Williams coin-op *Defender*, with lightning-paced action and millions and millions (well, up to 80) bad guys all onscreen and after your hide at one time, and it's completely brilliant. Want to know the best thing about it, though? It'll only set you back a mere eight quid. Unmissable.

COVER GIRL POKER (Emotional Pictures)

– Not!

AMIGA POWER

PENGUIN GALLUP CHARTS TOP 100

P-PICK UP A POWER CHART

We're pleased to announce that the Gallup charts, previously sponsored by ELSPA, the game publisher's association, now live under the wet little wing of – get this! – the well-known Penguin choccy biscuit instead! So cheers to Penguin creators McVities, and on with the show...

TEAM 17'S BEST YET

Project X
New Entry, Number 1

***Project X* – spectacular to look at, great street cred, but (we think) flawed.**

Wow, eh? For any game to go straight in at number one is a remarkable achievement, but when it's one from an almost-unknown (and very new) programming/publishing set-up, and entirely un-supported by a major advertising/promotion campaign, it's even more amazing.

Project X's success – it took only two days on sale to go to number two, and only eight to make the top slot – is based almost entirely on word of mouth. And what's this down to? Well, a good general reaction to *Alien Breed*, their last release, for a start – that went to number two spot after only three days of sales – but beyond that there have been enthusiastic magazine previews for many months now. *Project X* – to not put too fine a point on it – has caused quite a stir, though we can't help wondering that if all those buyers excited by sexy graphics had seen just how *tough* the game is, they might have been a little bit discouraged.

Debbie Bestwick, Sales and Marketing Manager for Team 17, had this to say about the success of what's in fact only her company's third release (the first was the budget kung-fu game *Full Contact*.): "We're overjoyed." And who can blame her?

EVERYONE GOES MADDEN FOR GRID IRON SOFTWARE

New Entry, Number 2

Now *here's* a game that deserves its success. Simon Jeffrey, Electronic Arts' UK PR Manager, is very pleased with EA's latest: "This is great, especially as American football is still very much a minority game. I think it's purely on the strength of the program it's done so well. Let's hope it hits the top next month, eh?"

We wouldn't be at all surprised – *Madden Football* made number one on the Mega Drive last year, while it's been a truly gigantic seller on both Super Nintendo and PC formats in the States.

★★★★★ Exceptional ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

1 (NE) **PROJECT X** Team 17 £25.99 ★★★
2 (NE) **JOHN MADDEN AMERICAN FOOTBALL** Electronic Arts £29.99 ★★★★★
3 (NE) **SPACE CRUSADE** Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ★★★★
4 (2) **FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX** MicroProse £34.99 ★★★★★
5 (99) **PINBALL DREAMS** 21st Century Entertainment £25.99 ★★★★★
6 (4) **RAINBOW ISLANDS** Hit Squad £7.99 ★★★★★
7 (NE) **BLACK CRYPT** Electronic Arts £25.99 ★★★★
8 (NE) **LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE** GBH £7.99 ★★★★★
9 (NE) **GOLDEN AXE** Tronix £9.99 ★★
10 (NE) **HARLEQUIN** Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ★★★★★

11 (NE) **SHADOW WARRIORS** Hit Squad £7.99 *
12 (48) **POPULOUS 2** Electronic Arts £29.99 ★★★★★
13 (56) **GIANTS OF EUROPE** Anco £7.99 ***
14 (NE) **SUPER OFF ROAD** Tronix £9.99 ****
15 (NE) **PACIFIC ISLANDS** Empire £29.99 ****
16 (13) **NEW ZEALAND STORY** Hit Squad £7.99 *****
17 (38) **ROBOCOP** Hit Squad £7.99 ****
18 (NE) **MANCHESTER UNITED** GBH £9.99 ***
19 (1) **1st DIVISION MANAGER** Code Masters £7.99 **
20 (NE) **TITUS THE FOX** Titus £25.99 ****
21 (98) **SPECIAL FORCES** MicroProse £34.99 ***
22 (25) **BUBBLE BOBBLE** Hit Squad £7.99****
23 (18) **JAMES POND 2 – ROBOCOD** Millennium £25.99 *****
24 (3) **F-16 COMBAT PILOT** Action 16 £9.99 ***
25 (10) **HARLEQUIN** Gremlin Graphics £25.99 ★★★★★
26 (46) **STRIDER** Kixx £7.99 ***
27 (NE) **EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 2** US Gold £35.99 ***
28 (26) **POPULOUS** Star Performers £10.99 ****
29 (53) **ABANDONED PLACES** Electronic Zoo £29.99 ****
30 (NE) **GRAEME SOUNESS SOCCER MANAGER** Zeppelin £7.99 **
31 (NE) **ADS** Action 16 £9.99 **
32 (NE) **SIM ANT** Ocean £25.99 ***
33 (85) **FUN SCHOOL 4 (7-11)** Europress £24.99 ***
34 (NE) **AGONY** Psygnosis £7.99 ***
35 (97) **AFTER BURNER** Hit Squad £7.99 ****
36 (NE) **DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE** Hit Squad £7.99 **
37 (95) **EURO'N SUPERLEAGUE** CDS £24.99 **
38 (RE) **FUN SCHOOL 4 (7-11)** Europress Software £24.99 ***
39 (51) **CHASE HQ** Hit Squad £7.99 ***
40 (NE) **BARBARIAN 2** Psygnosis £25.99 ***
41 (16) **BIRDS OF PREY** Electronic Arts £34.99 ****
42 (20) **OPERATION THUNDERBOLT** Hit Squad £7.99 ***
43 (40) **ANOTHER WORLD** US Gold £25.99 *****
44 (41) **PGA TOUR+** Electronic Arts £29.99 *
45 (NE) **MEGA-LO-MANIA/FIRST SAMURAI** Ubi Soft £30.99 ★★★★★
46 (15) **ITALIA '90** Tronix £9.99 **
47 (8) **TOYOTA CELICA RALLY** GBH £7.99 ***
48 (7) **A320 AIRBUS** Thalion £35.99**
49 (24) **CASTLES** Electronic Arts £29.99 ***
50 (19) **ULTIMA VI** Origin/Mindscape £30.99 *****
51 (NE) **SHADOWLANDS** Domark £29.99****
52 (RE) **FUNSCHOOL 3 (7 UP)** Europress £24.99 **
53 (NE) **SORCEROR** Mastertronic £9.99 ***
54 (9) **JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER** Virgin £29.99 ★★★★★
55 (59) **ALIEN BREED** Team 17 £24.99 ***
56 (17) **WWF WRESTLEMANIA** Ocean £25.99 *
57 (39) **RICK DANGEROUS** Kixx £7.99 ***
58 (90) **RENEGADE** Hit Squad £7.99 *
59 (NE) **IVANHOE** Hit Squad £7.99 **
60 (NE) **ULTIMATE GOLF** GBH Gold £9.99 ***
61 (5) **JAMES POND** GBH £7.99 ***
62 (NE) **MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE** Hit Squad £7.99 ****
63 (87) **THE QUEST OF AGRAVAIN** Code Masters £7.99 ***
64 (NE) **COVER GIRL POKER** Storm £25.99 *
65 (NE) **DELUXE STRIP POKER** CDS £7.99 *
66 (NE) **ARMOUR-GEDDON** Psygnosis £25.99 ***
67 (42) **MONKEY ISLAND** US Gold £29.99 ****
68 (27) **LOMBARD RAC RALLY** Hit Squad £7.99 ***
69 (NE) **SILENT SERVICE 2** MicroProse £34.99 ***
70 (NE) **RETURN TO EUROPE** Anco £7.99 ***
71 (12) **WACKY RACES** Hi-Tec Software £7.99 ***
72 (55) **HEIMDALL** Core Design £34.99 ****
73 (54) **OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS** Psygnosis £19.99 **
74 (52) **FOOTBALL CRAZY CHALLENGE** Anco £25.99 **
75 (NE) **SHINOBI** Tronix £9.99 **
76 (35) **UNTOUCHABLES** Hit Squad £7.99 **
77 (72) **PGA COURSES** Electronic Arts £14.99 ***
78 (28) **PAPERBOY** Encore £7.99 **
79 (57) **AWARD WINNERS** Empire £25.99 ***
80 (73) **ELVIRA 2 – THE JAWS OF CERBERUS** Accolade £34.99 **
81 (NE) **MIGHT AND MAGIC 3** US Gold £40.99 **
82 (RE) **FUN SCHOOL 3 (5-7)** Europress £24.99 ***
83 (RE) **KILLING GAME SHOW** Psygnosis £24.99 ***
84 (RE) **F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER** MicroProse £29.99 ***
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86 (77) **NINJA RABBITS** Micro Value £6.99 **
87 (NE) **EYE OF THE BEHOLDER** US Gold £30.99 *
88 (NE) **PREDATOR 2** Mirrorsoft £25.99 ***
89 (68) **DRAGON NINJA** Hit Squad £9.99 *
90 (67) **MICROPROSE GOLF** MicroProse £34.99 ***
91 (14) **ROBOCOP 3** Ocean £25.99 **
92 (43) **GHOULS AND GHOSTS** Kixx £7.99 **
93 (91) **VIDEOKID** Gremlin Graphics £25.99 **
94 (88) **MONTY PYTHON** Tronix £9.99 ***
95 (NE) **A10 TANK KILLER** Sierra £34.99 **
96 (NE) **PARASOL STARS** Ocean £25.99 *****
97 (NE) **VIZ** Tronix £9.99 ***
98 (NE) **STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER** Blue Ribbon £7.99 ***
99 (RE) **R-TYPE** Hit Squad. £7.99 ***
100 (NE) **WINGS** Mirrorsoft £29.99 **

We figure you must have some idea how the charts work by now, so briefly: they're put together by Gallup, they mix budgies and full pricers together, games are rated in stars, and now they're © McVities!

GREMLIN TURN TO SPACE FOR ADVENTURE

Space Crusade
New Entry, Number 3

***Space Crusade* – not unlike *Hero Quest*, but better (and a better seller too!)**

It's been a while since we reviewed it, maybe, but Gremlin's best RPG/strategy game yet has just entered the charts – and at a very high placing too. In fact, Gremlin's Ruth Bartles is "looking forward to it being a number one. We actually expected *Manchester United* and *Lotus Turbo Challenge*, a couple of our newest re-releases, to be in higher chart positions this month, but the success of *Space Crusade* has made up for it. In fact, we're looking forward to spending quite a bit of time at the top of the charts, with new budgies like *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* and *BSS Jane Seymour* out soon!"

Such confidence! Still, *Space Crusade*, at least, deserves to do well – it's a better game than predecessor *Hero Quest* (no piece of rubbish itself), and an ideal starting point for new space cadets – check the review in AP12 for more details.

SENSATIONAL CLIMB, BUT 'DREAMS' STILL GOES DOWN UNDER

Pinball Dreams
High Climber (99 to 5)

Pinball Dreams is a real favourite of ours, so it's nice to see flipper mania spreading the country quickly – this is another game that, we suspect, is doing well mainly through its reputation 'on the streets.'

The first big hit from 21st Century since it appeared last year from the ruins of 8-bit favourite Hewson, the success of *Pinball Dreams* has caught its publishers rather by surprise – seems 21st Century can't duplicate copies fast enough! Orders are even coming in from as far afield as Australia – the company reckon these are definitely the product of good word of mouth, since there hasn't been a 'down under' marketing campaign yet! ●

include UK VAT. We also accept cheques, POs and official purchase orders. © 1990 HiSOFT F&OE

PACFIC ISLANDS - THE SEQUEL TO TEAM YANKEE

Pacific Islands™

The year is 1995 ...

Disaffected Renegade Soviet communists, backed by North Korea, have invaded the Pacific atoll of Yama Yama. Your tank platoon, returning from the Persian Gulf, is the closest American unit to the scene. The burden has fallen on you to liberate this vital secret communications out-post.

Pacific Islands is a hectic race against time.

Unrivalled 3D

- Fast action, 3D real-time tank simulation using Empire's unique bit-mapped technology.
- Watch buildings explode as you make a direct strike.

Battle Selection

- All five islands on the Yama Yama atoll must be re-taken.
- You must decide how to attack each island.
- Full mission briefings before each battle.

Tank Battles

- Test your steel in over thirty nerve-quenching battles.
- Liberate villages, destroy ammunitions dumps, disrupt jungle supply lines, defend bridges.

Military Hardware

- T72s, BMPs, Hughes 500 Helicopters and SA9 Gaskins.
- $50,000,000 of equipment under your control.
- Infra-red imaging, laser range-finding. TOW missiles and DPICM artillery back-up.

Fund your Campaign

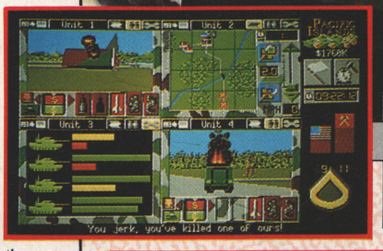
- Financial reward for destroying emeny installations.
- Fines imposed for collateral damage.

Communications Facilities

- Satellite dishes, radar towers, radio aerials.
- Spot opposition 'scout' vehicles before they give your position away.

Unique Control

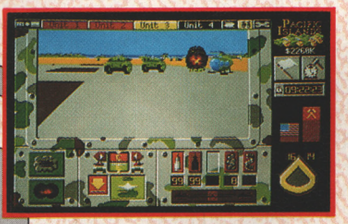
- Scrolling battle maps and updated status reports.
- Call up artillery and lay minefields.



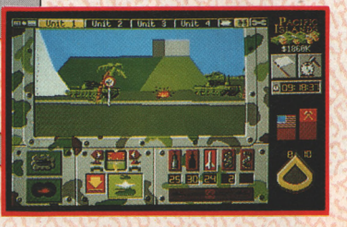
- *Simultaneous command of four tank units.*
- *View the battlefield from four perspectives.*
- *Control 16 different vehicles at once through an elegant yet simple control system.*

- *You must destroy all communications facilities as swiftly as possible. The longer you take, the more information the enemy have about your position and strength.*

- *Cope with multipile objectives - can you destroy an airfield, support a convoy, and make a reconnaissance within 40 minutes?*



- *Purchase all your equipment.*
- *Is there enough time and money to repair your damaged tracks and give the crews some rest?*



- *Eight different types of fighting vehicles modelled so that you even see the rivets!*
- *MI Abrams, M2 Bradleys, M113 APCs, ITVs.*

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GRAFTGOLD Creative Software

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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

It's been holiday time yet again for Matt – this time he's been camping with Mum and Dad in the south of France. He came back the same pasty white colour as when he left though – the minute he got there it started snowing, leaving the poor chap turning blue in his Bermuda shorts.
Matt's been wondering: How it can possibly have snowed in the south of France in April.

NEIL WEST

Rest easy, Motor Mart readers – Neil's got himself that new car he's been hankering after. "It's another Triumph Spitfire, and it's beautiful", he gushed. Neil's also been to Twickenham to see some real men's sport in the shape of the rugby Courage League Cup final.
Neil's been wondering: Why have all those little men out there come out without their padding.

MARK RAMSHAW

Mark's been 'vacationing' too – the lucky swine bagged a free week in the West Indies courtesy of a computer dealer, via the family computer shop. Luckily, he left just in time, because if he'd come in singing 'Woah, I'm going to Barbados' *just once more*, we would have shot him.
Mark's been wondering: What on Earth he did to get so ridiculously, disgustingly lucky.

JONATHAN DAVIES

Angry letters from furious parents have been flooding into the AMIGA POWER office after we called Jonathan a role model last month. Sadly, they've all been from *Jonathan*'s parents, deeply alarmed at the prospect of more than one Jonathan being unleashed on the world.
Jonathan's been wondering: What he did to make his mum and dad hate him so much...

STUART CAMPBELL

Guess what? Stuart's been on holiday. After a whole year without a break, he's been back home in Scotland for the third time in as many months. "I'd forgotten how beautiful it was", he sniffed on his return, armed with bizarre-smelling sweets called Oddfellows for the team.
Stuart's been wondering: If he can persuade Future to relocate in Edinburgh sometime soon.

MATTHEW SQUIRES

Matthew's been stuck in the office by himself for most of the month while everyone else has been swanning around the globe. He's relaxed by "Rallying through the lush countryside of Somerset in my cool supercharged 1950s Rover" and sleeping at his desk at nights.
Matthew's been wondering: Why everyone else seems to get four months holiday a year.

GARY PENN

Not one to be left out, Gary's taken a little break in the Great Malvern Hills. "They were hills, and they were great", was Gaz's considered 'Wish You Were Here' analysis. His juggling's coming along too – "But no tricks yet".
Gary's been wondering: Where his girlfriend's hamster's gone since it disappeared through a hole in the floorboards last week.

KARL FOSTER

"I haven't had the time to go on holiday", complains Karl. "I've spent six days so far just playing *Legend*, and the rest of the month immersing myself in the new Skinny Puppy album." Sounds to us like poor Karl could do with a bit of a holiday after all that mental torture...
Karl's been wondering: Whether he can afford to buy a new PC on the money we pay him.

AMANDA COOK

Shock horror! Amanda hasn't been on holiday this month! Instead, she's been entertaining her mother with shopping trips to Winchester and Cardiff, "So I can buy some new white Levi's for the summer to replace the ones I spilled chocolate milkshake on last month..."
Amanda's been wondering: If she'll win the Bub and Bob competition with her new dungarees.

DAVE GOLDER

Dave's been off to London to see some obscure German punk band ("Their name translates as The Dead Trousers", he told us helpfully), but mostly he's been showing off his Ernie Wise-style legs around the canal paths of Avon now he's back on his bike.
Dave's been wondering: Where Alfred Hitchcock's cameo spot is in Dial M For Murder.

SALLY MEDDINGS

Sally's been shopping too – she went to the Walt Disney shop in London's Oxford Street to buy a Mickey Mouse rucksack, but they'd sold out, so she bought a green alligator glove puppet called Ralph instead. Which seems curiously appropriate to Sal this month...
Sally's been wondering: Where her baby daughter learned to do projectile vomiting.

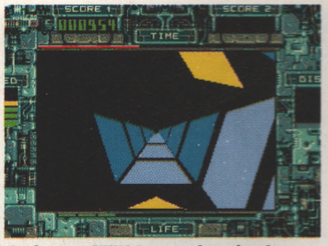
RICH PELLEY

He's back! Back! BACK! Yes, all you Rich Pelley devotees out there will be relieved to hear that your favourite international playboy reviewer is back with a vengeance in this month's AP. But what we really want to know is – where did you get that dapper moustache, Rich?
Rich's been wondering: If he can sue whoever mutilated his photograph in Studio/8...

GAMES

Don't worry – if you don't like football, it's alright. There's still loads of stuff in this month's European Championship Special issue of AMIGA POWER for your delight and delectation. There's the long-awaited and heavily-hyped *Addams Family* game from Ocean, finally here and strenuously reviewed by Matt Bielby. Not so hyped, but just as from-Ocean is their strange new Quavers tie-in puzzle game *Pushover*, while the more cerebral gamers among you are admirably catered for with Virgin's frighteningly plausible strategy thriller *Floor 13*, not to mention *Legend*, *Sim Ant* and *Eye Of The Beholder 2*. Egg hero Dizzy makes his first appearance in the front section of the magazine courtesy of the *Dizzy's Excellent Adventures* compilation, but most shocking of all – there's a wargame reviewed that Jonathan Davies actually *likes*! Eek! It must be summer...

***John Barnes*, complete with loo rolls.**



***Psyborg – STUN Runner*, but simpler.**

THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS): AN EASY-TO-USE BEGINNERS GUIDE

The AMIGA POWER reviewing philosophy is an absolute doddle to understand. No, really, it's simple. But if you're reading this at all you must want to know at least a little bit more, so here, in all its glory, is The Way We Do Things At AMIGA POWER....

1) We're all aware of how much software costs, which is why we believe a game has to be *really* good to be worth buying – *or* worth giving a good mark. Happily, there's more than enough top-notch stuff around if you only look – we mark as hard as we do to prevent you from wasting time (or money!) on the bad ones. You'll thank us for it in the end...

2) We believe rating systems should be simple and easy to understand. That's why we just give one mark out of 100, a few summing up sentences, and that's it. What more is there?

3) A third point? We don't know the meaning of the phrase.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

The best *Mario*-style game on the Amiga best of the year and most playable film licence ever – true!

Game: The Addams Family
Publisher: Ocean
Authors: James Higgins (code), Warren Lancashire and Simon Butler (graphics) at Ocean
Price: £25.99
Release: End of May

Told you Ocean games were starting to get really good (a couple of months ago in AP11, back issue fans)! This is, for my money, the best Ocean release since the budget Amiga version of *Head Over Heels* last year (yes, better than *Parasol Stars*), and one of the best 16-bit console-style Amiga releases to date. Of this type of game, only *Harlequin* gives it a run for its money, really.

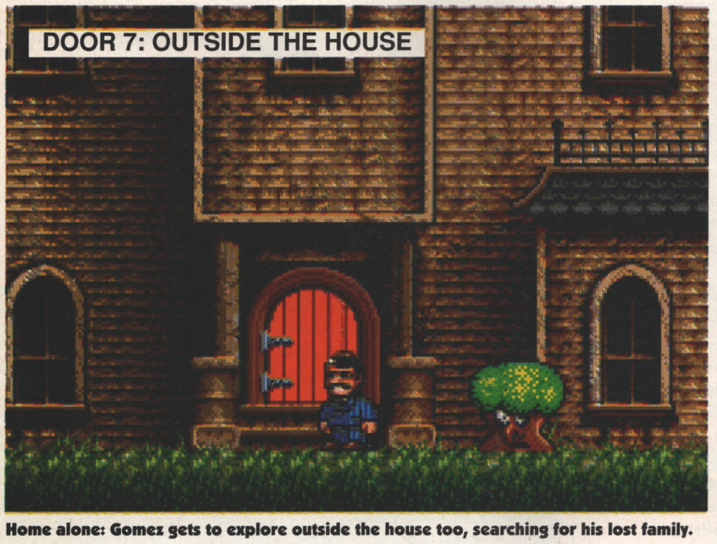
So what can we put this down to? Well, the fact that the Amiga *Addams Family* has been developed in parallel with the very-well-received Super Famicom version, for one, and we all know where the real development time and money is being spent these days – on posh console games for the vast American market. There's been a degree of time and effort put into the actual game design here that we only really get to see six or seven times a year.

"There's not a wasted screen in the entire thing"

There's been one major change since we previewed the game back in AMIGA POWER 11, and it's been for the better. The parallax scrolling has gone – totally. What we're now left with are plain black backgrounds – they may not look quite as pretty in the screen shots, but the sprites show up better against them, and, crucially, the game scrolls far more smoothly. In fact, I'd challenge you to come up with something that moves better on the Amiga – this is a joy to play, and one big reason is that you're not aware of the limitations of the machine when you play it at all, just your own limitations as a gamesplayer. Loading between levels is kept to a couple of seconds each time too, adding to that console-style feeling of immediate access.

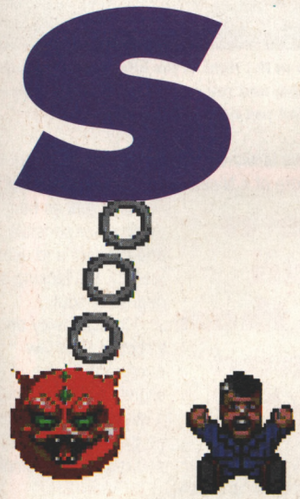
Want something to compare the game to? Well, if *Robocod* was fast and *Sonic*-like, *Addams Family* has more than a touch of *Super Mario Bros 3* to it, particularly in... well, lots of it, actually. If you're familiar with that game you'll see what I mean immediately, just by looking at the pictures on this page.

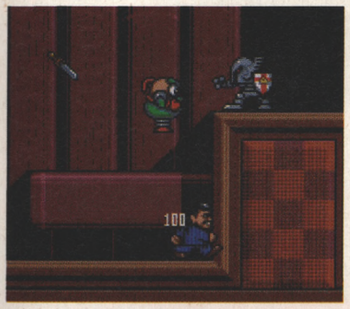
The plot is simple, and has (mercifully) very little to do with the largely story-free Addams movie. Various member of the family have been stolen away by an assortment of evil forces and hidden around the house. It's family head Gomez's job – as the one surviving member – to trot around rescuing them all, though that's going to take some doing. Not only are the four people to be rescued initially (Pugsley, Granny, Wednesday and Fester), each guarded by an end-of-level



Home alone: Gomez gets to explore outside the house too, searching for his lost family.

to date, Ocean's





Here we are in the library – that's another hundred points there (no wonder Gomez is looking so chuffed with himself).

Boss character, there are a handful of other Boss characters littered around to halt your progress too (killing these provides an extra life), not to mention literally hundreds of rooms and sub-levels to make your way through.

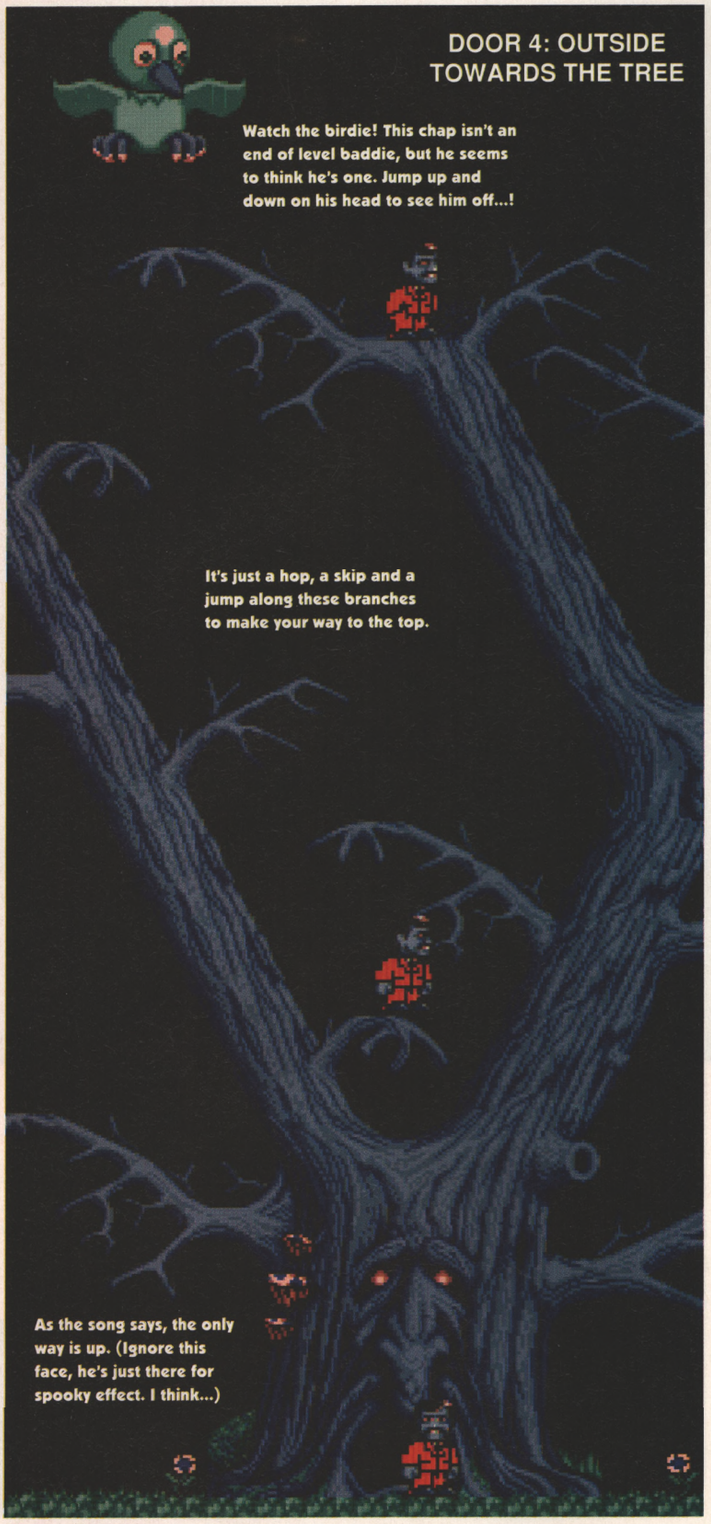
Only when all four have been rescued do you get to open a wall blocking off half the music room to reveal – loads more levels (as many as you've been through in the first half of the game, according to some sources at Ocean, though we find that pretty hard to believe), somewhere at the end of which you'll find your beloved Morticia. There's no getting away from it – this is one big game, alright.

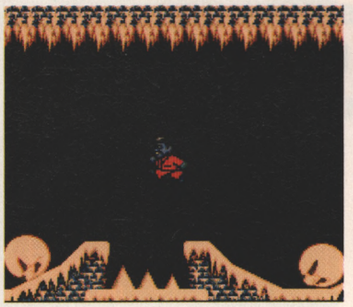
It's also a bloody tricky one – though not in any unfair sort of way (there's no hidden danger to be found here, Stuart and others of a similar disposition will be pleased to learn). Bags of restarts (and even more secret rooms, packed to the rafters with extra money, power-ups and lives) give you more than a fighting chance, while assorted codes mean that (unless you want to) you don't have to replay bits you've already done each new time you come back to play.

The game is also packed to the brim with nasties and landscape obstacles to evade – there's not a wasted screen in the entire thing – and for once they're nicely integrated too. You don't get the sense that the game designers are just throwing baddies at you for the sake of it here – the jumping and landscape-evading is at least as important a part of the gameplay as the baddie killing (oh yes, and the baddies all die on the first hit too. This isn't one of those hopeless platformers that half thinks it's a beat-'em-up, al la *Magic Pockets*). There's nothing much wrong with the way the game's paced or presented at all, quite frankly – and how many Amiga platform games can you say that about?

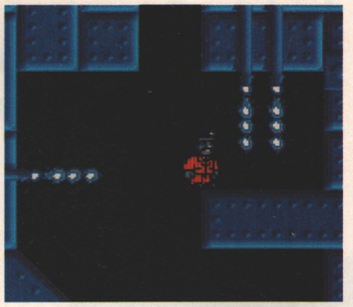
The other thing we always seem to be criticising Amiga platformers for is a lack of imagination. Not this one though. Yes, we've seen a lot of these gameplay elements before (the big bullets you can jump on, the buttons to press to move walls or create platforms, the moving platforms, the guillotines, swinging maces and all the rest) but significantly not in Amiga games very often, much more likely in PC Engine, Mega Drive or coin-op ones. And besides, rarely are they combined any better than this.

Faults? Well, there are a few – what game doesn't have at least a few, and they're certainly worth talking about, in the interest of balance if nothing else. The first →





To the left of the kitchen we get this fridge level – it's a bit larger in there than the average Hotpoint you have in your house!



Go to the right of the kitchen, on the other hand, and you get to this furnace affair – mind you don't burn your hands!

is that the backgrounds are a bit empty now, and that the game looks somehow slightly unfinished without them. This is true, alright – you can't deny it – but equally you can't deny that a) the lack of backdrops doesn't effect the gameplay at all (in fact, it's the principle reason the scrolling is so smooth), and b) at least there's no danger of you getting fatally distracted from the main action by something clever going on in the background anymore.

"More a Nissan 300ZX than a vintage Ferrari"

Another criticism I've heard is that some of the sub-levels do seem to go on a bit, with umpteen variations on the same theme repeated in slight variation, rather than anything new happening. This is called depth or value-for-money, I guess – you're simply getting a lot of game here.

Some may find the control inertia slightly uncomfortable too, I suppose – though, to be fair, everyone in this office (Mark being the only exception) seems to think it works just fine. I certainly had no problems with it – it's nothing like as unfriendly as the inertia in *Hudson Hawk*, say – but I know Mark found it a bit 'forced', claiming that for him, the way the Gomez character slides to a halt sometimes seems to have little to do with how fast he was going. I have to say I don't see it myself.

No, for me maybe the biggest fault with the game – and it's not so much a fault with what's there, really, as an absence of something good – is that there's little here that'll really knock your socks off. There are no great surprises, no really impressive giant sprites (well, not that I've seen) – the pacing is more or less uniform throughout. The *Mario* games are like this too, you might say (and, indeed, you'd have a point), but the fact remains. This is without doubt a great game, but it's more of a Nissan 300ZX than a vintage Ferrari – just as fast, much more sensible and efficient and user friendly, but lacking a degree of soul.

Now go away and forget the last few paragraphs – the slightly whinging ones – because they make no difference at all to my buying recommendation. Quite simply: go out and get this game. What more can I say? That you'll regret it if you don't...?

● *MATT BIELBY*

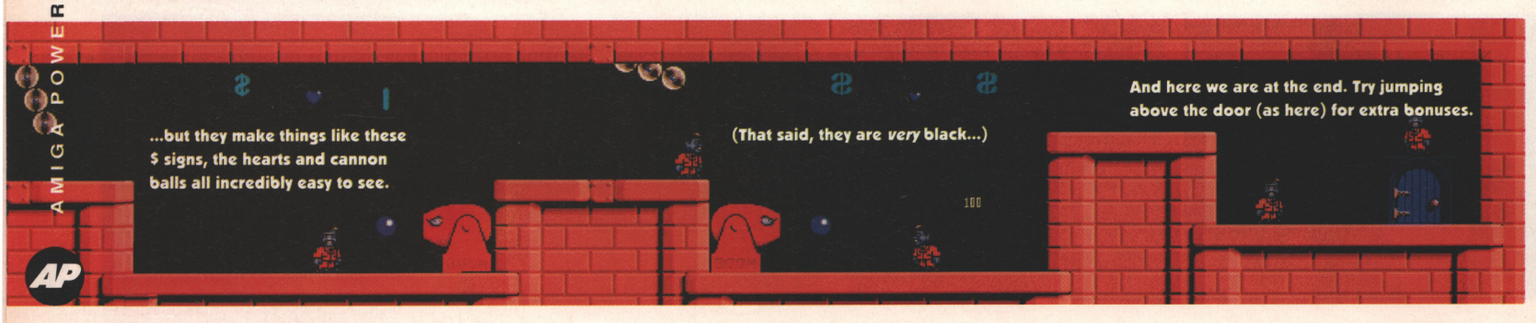
UPPERS One of the – if not *the* – most together console-style games on the Amiga yet. There's bags of it, it's mostly very well thought out, it's been put together with great care throughout, and technically it's hard to fault. If you're a secret rooms/hidden extras freak you'll be in hog heaven.

DOWNERS Perhaps a tad soul-less. There's little to really knock your socks off here, just a great deal that's quietly very pleasing indeed.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This is Ocean's best stab at a film license to date, and one of their best 16-bit games of any type – they've learned to ignore much of the plot (not that this particular film had much of one to start with anyway) and concentrate on the characters and atmosphere instead. A great game...

88 PERCENT



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It's the man himself, ladies and gentlemen, Mr John Barnes! Still, we don't recommend you play the game simply as Him – it's dull.

Publisher: Krisalis
Authors: Peter Harrap & The Teque Team
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

JOHN BARNES EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

Krisalis manage to get their game of two halves out first, but will updating *Man*

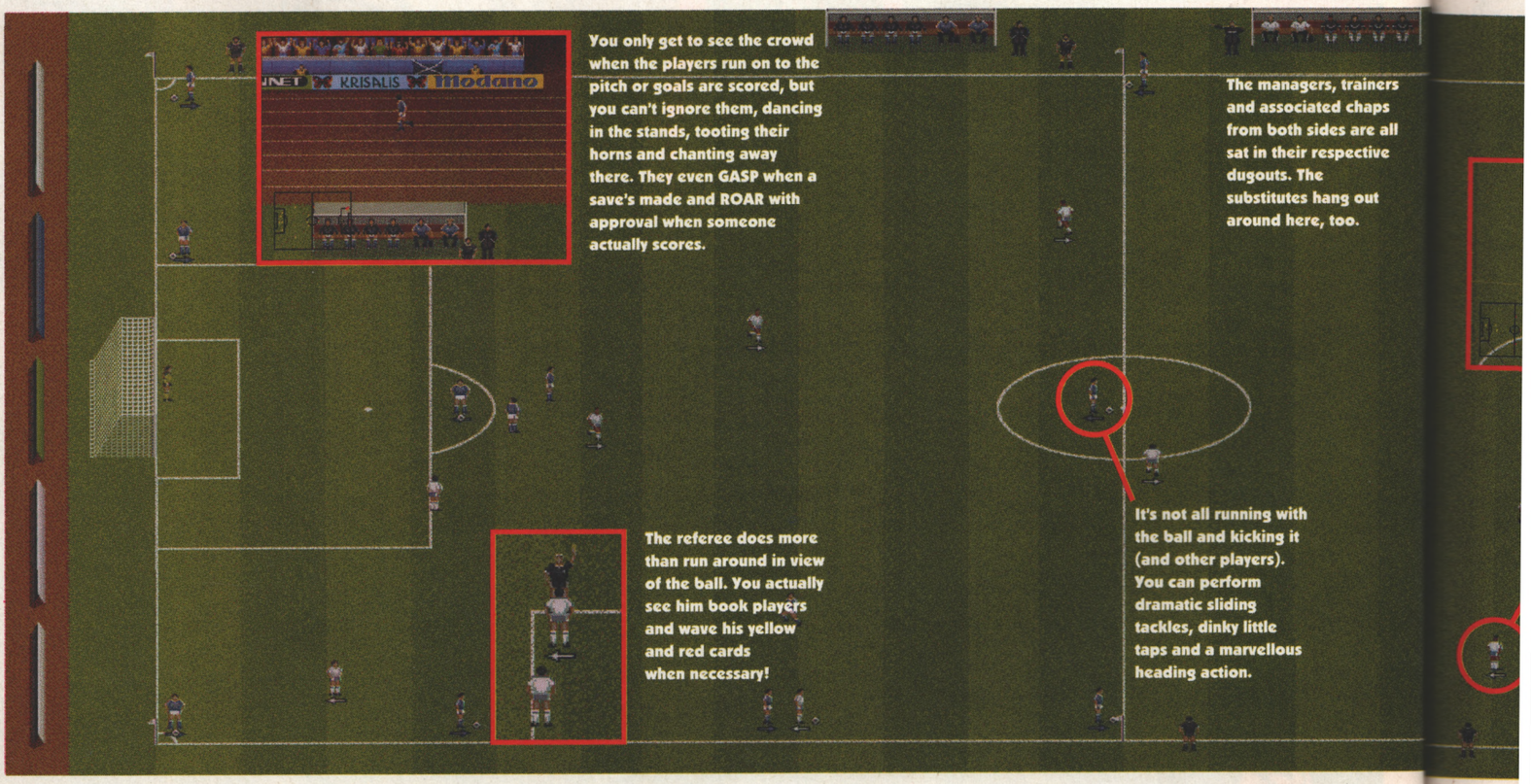
Hold it right there and ask yourself this question: is there really any room in your crowded games collection for yet another football simulator? Well, yes, quite frankly, there *is* in mine – and the software houses seem to be betting that there is in yours too. This is but one of a whole number of new footie games released to tie in with the European Championships (see Stuart's feature this issue). There's a good reason for this, of course – they can keep on churning them out until someone actually gets it *right* as far as I'm concerned.

That's right, despite numerous stabs at it from just about every software house ever, I'd say that nobody has come up with a footie game that does the genre justice yet. To date I would say that Anco came closest with *Kick Off* – an opinion not shared by everyone on AMIGA POWER, I know *(Too bloody right – Mark & Stuart)* – but while it's far from perfect, and arguably nothing like real football at all, it plays better than Waylon Jennings live, and I couldn't ask for much more than that.

"It doesn't offer much scope in the long run"

There's one other big contender, of course – *Manchester United Europe*, the predecessor to this *John Barnes* game. While this didn't attract me in quite the same way, I just this minute produced a personal Top Ten Footy Chart and it managed to come second anyway.

As *John Barnes European Football* is, presumably, an improvement over *Manchester United*, then, it has a fair chance of becoming the reigning soccer game – at least until the almost certainly all-conquering *Sensible Soccer* becomes available. But does it? Well, let's find out,



You only get to see the crowd when the players run on to the pitch or goals are scored, but you can't ignore them, dancing in the stands, tooting their horns and chanting away there. They even GASP when a save's made and ROAR with approval when someone actually scores.

The managers, trainers and associated chaps from both sides are all sat in their respective dugouts. The substitutes hang out around here, too.

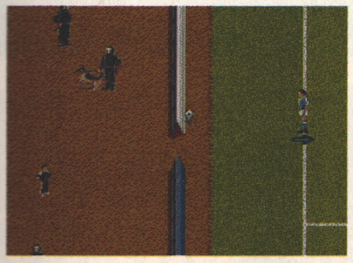
The referee does more than run around in view of the ball. You actually see him book players and wave his yellow and red cards when necessary!

It's not all running with the ball and kicking it (and other players). You can perform dramatic sliding tackles, dinky little taps and a marvellous heading action.

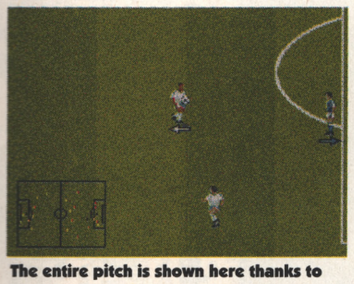
shall we...? Without further ado it's me against *Barnesy* in The Bottom Line Championship finals...

PHWEEEP! KICK OFF!

And already *Barnesy*'s in possession... In *John Barnes* you can play a single match against either a computer-controlled or human opponent. (No surprises there.) Or you can compete against seven other European teams (under human or computer control) in a Championship of sorts (two Groups of four teams slug it out, as it were). It's fine as far as it goes, but doesn't offer much scope for lone players in the long run.



In this touching Escape To Victory re-enactment, Mo Johnston attempts a breakout but is foiled by the guards.



The entire pitch is shown here thanks to the miracle of modern technology. Sadly, the scanner's not much use in practice.

PHWEEEP! ONE NIL!

And *Barnes* is the scorer! He's off to a cracking start with options galore. Among other things, you can determine the length of the match and turn off the weather (otherwise it rains from time to time), the scanner, the setpieces and celebrations if you don't like them.

PHWEEEP! ONE ALL!

Oh dear. Despite being simple enough to handle immediately, I found the control a little too sensitive for my liking. When it comes to gaining possession, it's too easy to tap the ball away by mistake, and all the boys move rather too fast – they end up running around the pitch at great speed and looking like dorks. Surely with all these options, some form of sensitivity adjustment wouldn't have gone amiss?

OOOAAAH!

A near miss. The setpieces used for throw-ins, corners and free kicks are too clinical and not as free-flowing as I'd like – particularly the free kicks taken just outside the box (that does my head in).

PHWEEEP! TWO ONE!

Spellbinding! It's that old Barnesy magic coming through! The title music's a thumpy toe-tapper, and the sound during play is even better. There's a dead 'thunky' ball-biffing noise, classy klaxon hoots, the occasional 'Boom!' (!), grunts from the 'keepers at full stretch, and requests of "Here!" from eager players. And even though the lively crowd's as tinny as the whistle sound, it all makes for a big Big Match atmosphere.

You only get one chance to choose a formation per match, so you'd better make it matter! And (excitement upon excitement!), when your selections have been made, you can do it again for your computer-controlled opponent, too!

PHWEEEP! THREE ONE!

And it's *Barnes* again for a hat-trick! *Barnesy* has oodles of niceties to add to the buzz generated by the sound. The referee and linesmen behave pretty much like the real-life counterparts, and there are even occupied dugouts (for effect only I'm afraid – they aren't at all interactive). I also like the way the players stand around with their hands on their hips, waiting for you to move or pass the ball. The players' heads turn to follow the ball, too, and scorers sometimes run off the pitch and on to the surrounding track to share their delight with the fans.

Whether you play against man or machine, you have to represent a country. Take your pick from this choice of eight...

OOOAAAH!

That was close. *Barnesy*'s primarily horizontal action is claustrophobic (the players are roughly a fifth of the size of the area of the pitch shown). The radar showing the players' positions is all very thoughtful, ta, but it has no practical application. Your best bet is to keep playing with the same team and get used to where they by and large position themselves (that's if you can instantly tell the difference between the faceless players without wasting a valuable split second looking down to see the name of the man in possession).

"This is a very atmospheric footy game"

THERE'S NOTHING IN IT, BRIAN

And at the end of the day we have a result. *Barnesy*'s a winner, but only just – it could have gone either way. Supporters of *Man United Europe* will be able to wallow in *Barnesy*'s shallow waters happily – this is a very atmospheric footy game, packed with neat touches, but still significantly flawed, in particular the small area of pitch on screen at any one time. This was apparently a speed trade off – *Man United* had a bigger area visible but moved more slowly – it's up to the individual which you prefer.

Me? After 90 minutes of sheer hell (well, it's not that bad), I'm off to pontificate with the lads over a Lucozade. Ah, if only Barnesy could reproduce his Liverpool form on the Amiga...

● *GARY PENN*

UPPERS Atmosphere is *Barnesy*'s strong point– its sound and nice touches make the going as electric as the Real Thing. *Barnesy* also scores in the accessibility stakes, and there's playability to be found provided you dig deep enough.

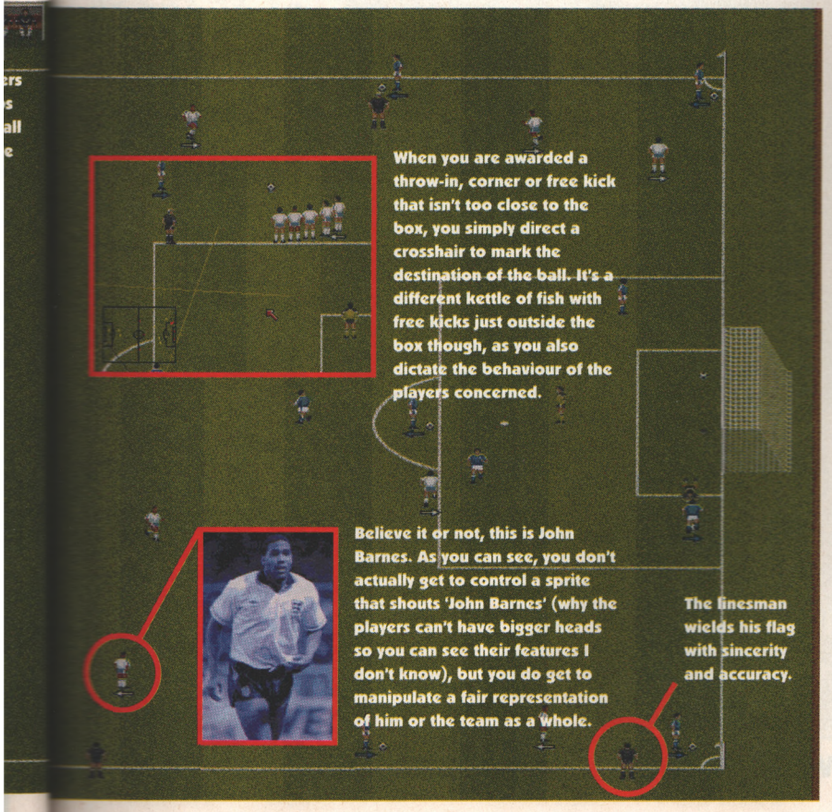
DOWNERS The claustrophobic display and fiddly control let the side down, but all told there are no own-goals scored here.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's fine – better than most footy games, but still No Big Deal. *Barnesy* doesn't deserve to be shown any cards but it won't win any major cups either. It's likely to be one of the better footie games from this year's crop, but we're willing to bet, even at this early stage, that you-know-exactly-what will show it a clean pair of

74 PERCENT

Utd Europe be enough to secure a win?



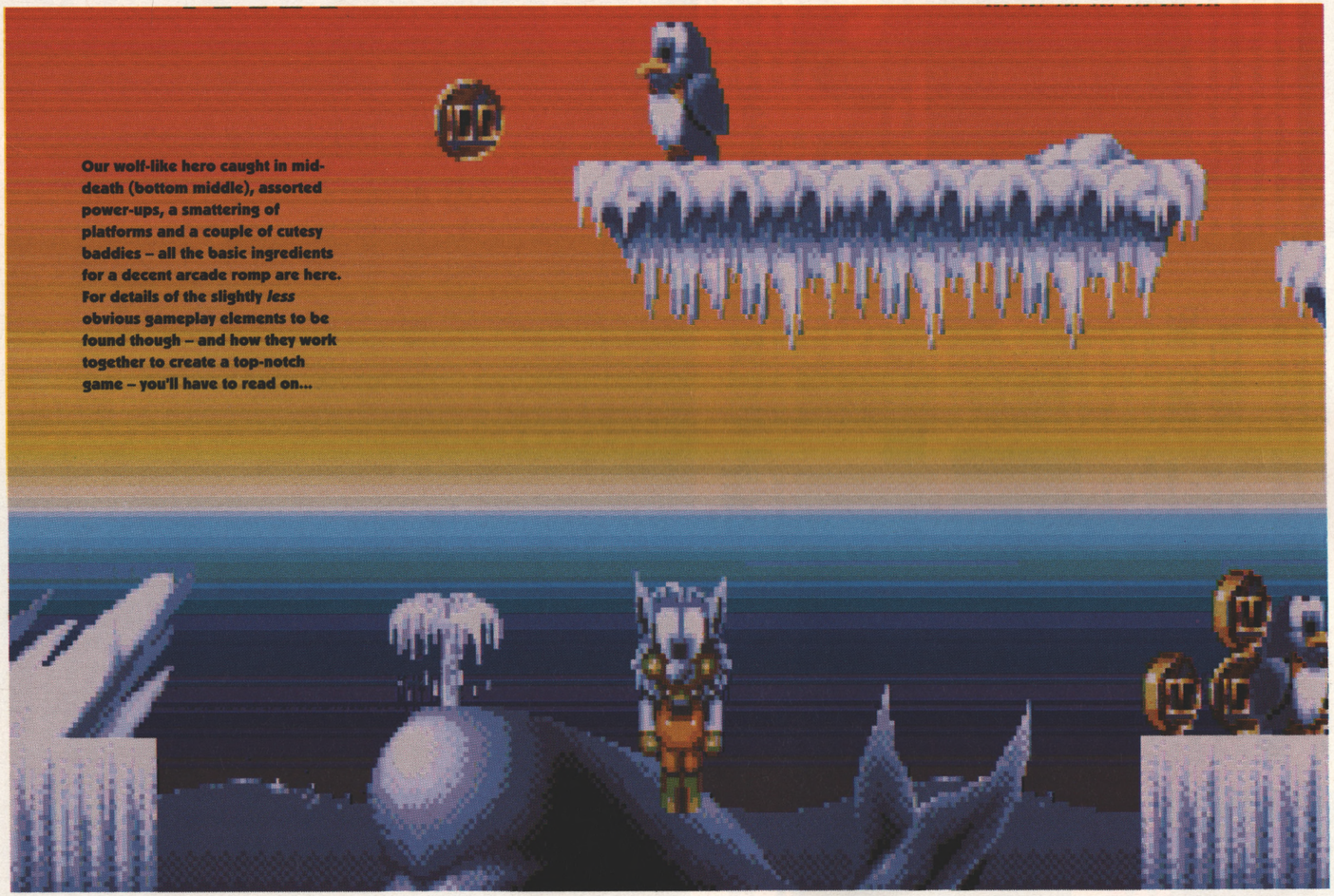
When you are awarded a throw-in, corner or free kick that isn't too close to the box, you simply direct a crosshair to mark the destination of the ball. It's a different kettle of fish with free kicks just outside the box though, as you also dictate the behaviour of the players concerned.

Believe it or not, this is John Barnes. As you can see, you don't actually get to control a sprite that shouts 'John Barnes' (why the players can't have bigger heads so you can see their features I don't know), but you do get to manipulate a fair representation of him or the team as a whole.

The linesman wields his flag with sincerity and accuracy.

FIRE &ICE

Any new game from Andrew Braybrook – programmer of the Amiga *Rainbow Islands* – has a lot to live up to. Here's how he does it – in style.



Our wolf-like hero caught in mid-death (bottom middle), assorted power-ups, a smattering of platforms and a couple of cutesy baddies – all the basic ingredients for a decent arcade romp are here. For details of the slightly *less* obvious gameplay elements to be found though – and how they work together to create a top-notch game – you'll have to read on...

Game: Fire & Ice
Publisher: Renegade
Price: £25.99
Authors: Graftgold – Andrew Braybrook (design & programming), Phillip Williams, John W Lilley (graphics), Jason Page (sound & music)
Release: Out now

ICE MAN SPEAKS

Veteran programmer Andrew Braybrook began games programming about a decade ago, making quite a name for himself on 8-bit machines. Now working with long-time partner Steve Turner as 'Graftgold', he's had his hand in a sizeable slice of the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100. Here's a quick chat-ette we recently had with the man.

Where did the idea for this game come from?
It started way back in 1990, around September if I remember rightly. The original idea sprung from wanting a game where everything was alive. The fire creatures (which now only reside on the Egyptian levels) originally played a much larger role. I had intelligent movement routes planned out for them, but it just wasn't obvious enough to the player. Although complex, they didn't really add to the game. There was a lot of processing going on to control them, but they spent most of their lives off-screen. It was all a bit wasted really.

Other changes? I'd envisaged smaller scale graphics originally, and the player's character was a big, floppy animal who actually bounced around. It didn't work though – it

Andrew Braybrook, the man they're all calling 'Mr *Rainbow Islands* – The Man Responsible For The Best Amiga Game Of All' (surely as good an excuse for a knighthood as any) – is back, and boy, what a reputation he's got to live up to. It's not just *Rainbow* either – Mr Braybrook's output includes the excellent

"One of

and cold tale is Cool Coyote. He doesn't quite compete with foxy old Titus in the charisma stakes, but he has got character. On the title screen he can be seen bashing away on the ol' joanna – turning occasionally to give a friendly wink at the player, while his hands (paws?) and feet actually move in sync with the tune.

It's something that's

shattering ice bombs, which send loads of tiny balls flying around the screen. These power-ups are randomly collected by shooting at ice blocks (which are initally invisible, only appearing when fired at). Only one power-up can be held at a time, which complicates things, as do the volatile clouds which you can collect snowflake bombs from – these might actually blast you with lightning as you try to collect the flakes

sounds daunting, don't fret – the game allows instant access to the first four levels (although progress from one area to the next isn't allowed in this mode). Thoughtful stuff, which adds to the feeling of 'neatness' about this game.

As you'd guess on an Arctic to Egypt trip, as the levels progress, the climate gets warmer, and as things get warmer your ice based weapons get progressively less

excuse for a knighthood as any) – is back, and boy, what a reputation he's got to live up to. It's not just *Rainbow* either – Mr Braybrook's output includes the excellent *Paradroid 90* and a string of C64 classics too. He's no newcomer to the world of top quality games.

A new Braybrook release ought to be something very special then. So what of *Fire & Ice*? Well, if you can resist the temptation to glance down at the Bottom Line box (over the page) you'll find that I'm about to tell you.

"One of those rare games that feels just right"

SNOWBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE

The screenshots give the game away as far as game style goes. *Fire & Ice* is, superficially at least, just the latest in a long line of parallax scrolling platformers. So what's so special about this one? Well, for one thing, this is one of those rare games that both looks and feel just 'right'. Not only is the basic structure well thought out, it's garnished with a mass of subtleties which add a welcome human element to what could merely be a very slick and professional game.

Plot time then. The hero of this hot player, while his hands (paws?) and feet actually move in sync with the tune.

It's something that's evident throughout the game too, particularly in the way he interacts with his environment. As he bounds around his platform world he hugs the landscape perfectly, for instance, moving slowly up hills and faster down them (particularly on level one – the snow level – where much slip-sliding and skidding occurs). Mr Coyote is also capable of ducking (even in mid-skid), jumping (with controllable height and sideways movement) and, of course, firing at the nasties.

The element of ice plays a major role in the game too. Instead of simply blasting the bad guys, Cool Coyote throws ice balls which freeze them (harder monsters take more shots to freeze). Once frozen, you can then bash into them, shattering their sub-zero bodies into thousands of pieces. Dither to long, though, and they'll thaw out – good timing is essential.

For the rest of the weapon system, *Fire & Ice* conforms to modern standards with a reasonable selection of power-ups, including snowflake bombs, ice bubbles and clouds which you can collect snowflake bombs from – these might actually blast you with lightning as you try to collect the flakes from it.

Okay, okay, you probably want to know what the point is about now, don't you? Well, Cool Coyote is attempting to make his way from his Arctic home to the sunny sands of Egypt, rescuing his stolen pups along the way – no mean feat, especially since he's walking the whole way, and the entire animal kindgdom is out to stop him.

Seven different areas (comprising 30 levels in total) await, each with its own visual style, idiosyncracies, and nasties. After getting past the penguin-strewn Arctic and Haggis-filled Scotland, it's underwater for our furry hero. Here he dons a snorkle, bouncing around the seascape blasting all manner of aquatic life, while getting transport help from turtles, rising air bubbles, and trampoline-like clams. It's all more than a little *Magic Pockets* – in the use of inertia particularly – I have to admit, but there's a lot more to it. Every level has its own individual identity, requiring the player to learn a new set of tactics to progress.

If traversing half the globe which complicates things, as do the volatile trip, as the levels progress, the climate gets warmer, and as things get warmer your ice based weapons get progressively less useful. On later levels the bad guys correspondingly take a *lot* more shooting to freeze.

Happily, if you've collected any pups, they add their fire power to your own, helping Cool Coyote bash the bad guys that much quicker. (Just don't bounce off too fast or you'll leave them behind.)

On each level you have to collect key parts from dead baddies to exit – leading the pups through one of these open doors will give Mr Coyote an extra life, and believe me, he needs them. (Extra lives can also be found by collecting large bones, but these are few and far between.)

There are three goals to the game then – to blast the nasties in order to collect the key and reach the exit of each level, to collect as many bonus objects along the way as possible, and to lead the puppies to the exit to gain extra lives.

That's not all there is to the game though. Hang around too long, for instance, and mysterious evil snowballs begin to materialise and gravitate towards Cool Coyote – shades of *Defender*, ↓

As you'd guess on an Arctic to Egypt smaller scale graphics originally, and the player's character was a big, floppy animal who actually bounced around. It didn't work though – it didn't have the necessary cute appeal.

What platform game reference points (if any) did you use?
I actually made a conscious effort not to look at too many other platform games. Mirrorsoft, who we were originally developing the game for, disagreed quite strongly with me on this though, and so some elements from other games did creep in – the snow world, for instance, does have recognisable elements of other games. I think the graphics guys were probably more influenced by *Sonic* et al, than I was. If anything *Rainbow Islands* was the biggest influence for me, programming-wise at least.

From the start, though, we wanted something console-like (in fact we're looking at the possiblity of a console version of *Fire & Ice* right now), but which didn't copy from existing console-games.

You said *Rainbow Islands* had been an influence?
Well, yes, there are little elements which have been influenced by my experiences with *Rainbow Islands*. The accumulation system for bonuses, for example, carries over from game to game (a la *Rainbow Islands*). There are hidden elements which don't need to be known, but the player will eventually become aware of them, and *then* use them, which is very *Rainbow Islands*.

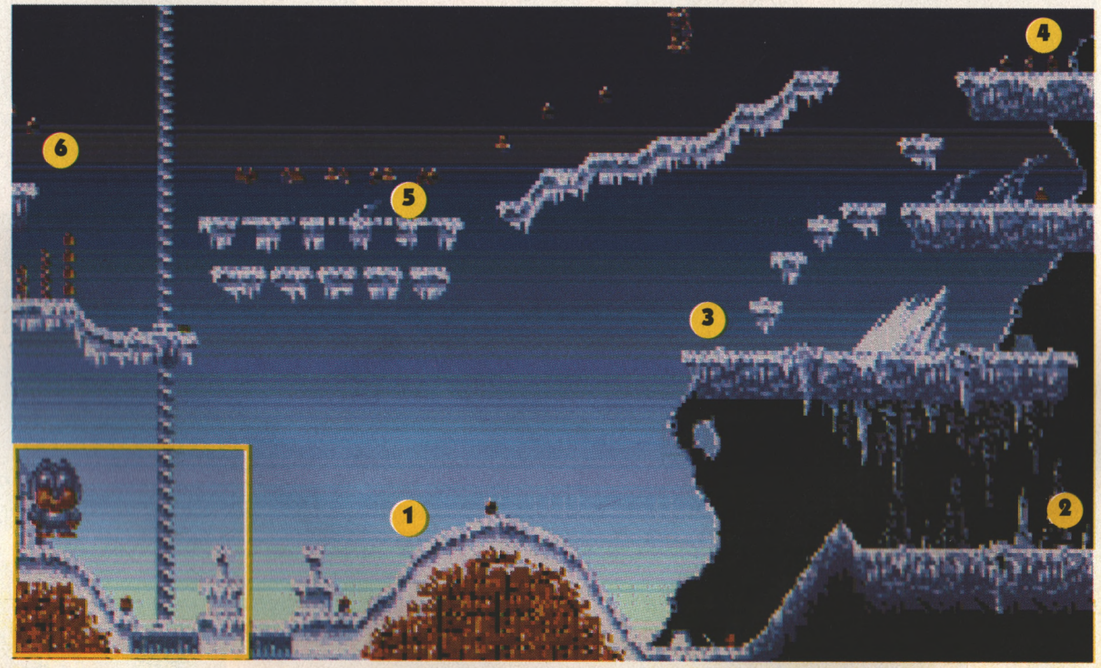
Stepping up the difficulty was another thing learned from there. The time spent on a level will affect meanie speed and fire speed. We've made an effort to make the meanies a little less predictable than those in *Rainbow Islands* though. Still, as in *Rainbow*, the *Fire & Ice* player can use the game physics against the meanies.

Do you see yourself doing another Cool Coyote game?
We may well produce a *Fire & Ice 2* data disk, which would contain new lands, backgrounds and sound effects. There's also the possibility of transporting the central character into another game style. He's pretty versatile, and I feel comfortable with him, so that's an interesting route →

YOUR PRE-LEVEL MAP

Handy, isn't it? This is a map of one of the four levels you've got to cross in the Ice World – shown before each level.

The box we've drawn on the map – the coyote character you see there isn't to scale! – shows both where you've got to start from and the size of each screen. Here – marked on the map with that old little-number-in-circles trick, are some of the main elements of the game.



1. Watch out for the snowfall around here.

2. Into the caves – avoid the falling stalagtite and climb the invisible steps.

3. Once all the key components have been collected, this is where exit will appear.

4. Take a stroll up here for power-ups.

5. Careful timing is needed to leap past the mass of bouncing spikes

6. Leap up here for an extra life bone.

methinks. Survive these for a while and the game will relent, allowing escape through the exit even *without* all the key parts – a welcome touch, when that final section eludes you.

SEND FOR THE FIRE BRIGADE

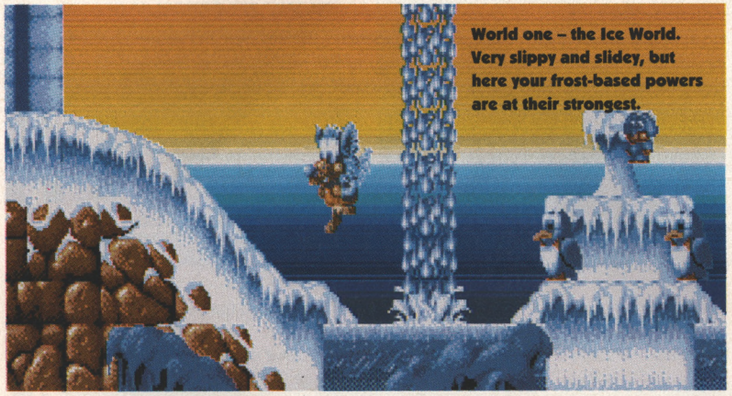
So that's how it works (ie it's a helluva lot more structured than many platformers), but what you lot really want to know is how well it plays. *(How does it play? – Reader's voice.)* Well, when I first saw a preview of the game about six months ago, I must admit I wasn't too impressed. It was slick enough, but it looked a little empty and dull – kind of like (ahem) Vanilla Ice. The finished game is thankfully well fleshed out. Each level has been lovingly embellished, and the different game elements gel pretty marvellously too.

That's not to say that I don't have one or two criticisms. The backdrops might be colourful and useful (day turns to night and back again, the smooth sky scenes changing colour moodily), but they give the game a slightly empty, unfinished look. Sure, there's a smattering of foreground parallax, but that's a big expanse of colour without detail in the background, and it makes it look like the game isn't doing itself justice. Occasionally I found myself wishing that things were a little faster too. We're not in *Magic Pockets* territory here though (thank goodness) – indeed, much of the game is as fast as, say, Gremlin's *Harlequin* – but the moments when our coyote hero accelerates down ski slopes near the beginning give a tantalising glimpse of how rapid the game *could* have been. It's not a huge gripe, but it occasionally frustrates.

Other game comparisons? Well, you could go on drawing them all day – *Fire & Ice* has something in common with *Leander* as far as feel is concerned, for instance – but there's little real point. It's to *Fire & Ice*'s credit that it remains very much its own game. (And where there have been outside influences – *Rainbow Islands*, say – you could hardly question their pedigree.)

What more is there to say then? The structure is sound, the main character appealling, the weapons systems inventive, the locations unusual, the control feel spot on, the speed at least adequate, the inventiveness apparent, the surface polished and the borrowed gameplay elements – where you find them – taken from the very best of sources. *Fire & Ice* holds its head proud amongst the best of Amiga platform games – a genre which can now hold its own against the Megadrive. It's Brrrrrrilliant!

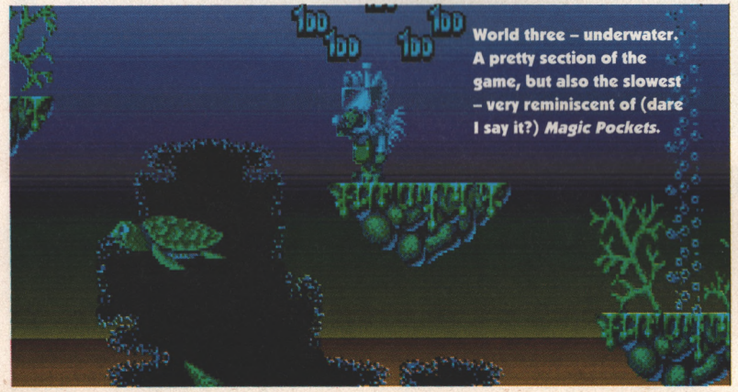
● ***MARK RAMSHAW***



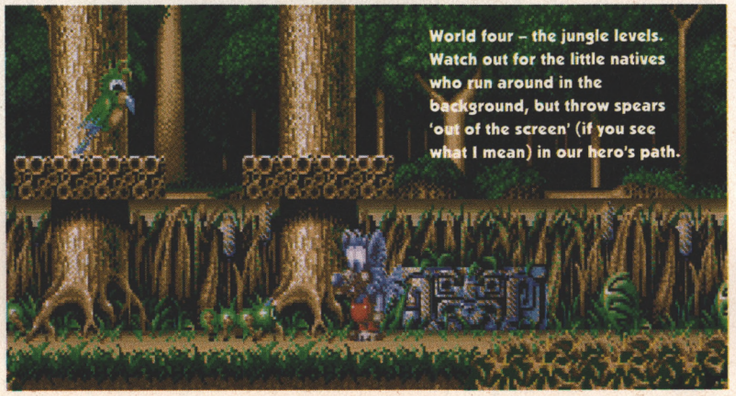
World one – the Ice World. Very slippy and slidey, but here your frost-based powers are at their strongest.

World two – Scotland. Rabbits, haggis, owls and various other Highland wildlife. (Now where's that pesky Stuart Campbell?)

This neat map window sits there looking pretty throughout the game, teasing you with how much more there is to go.



World three – underwater. A pretty section of the game, but also the slowest – very reminiscent of (dare I say it?) *Magic Pockets*.



World four – the jungle levels. Watch out for the little natives who run around in the background, but throw spears 'out of the screen' (if you see what I mean) in our hero's path.

to follow. Obviously, it all depends on how successful this one is.

Why the lack of backdrops?
We decided to use 16 colour mode for the main game screen, which prevents us from putting detail on the background plane. The other option was to have two layers of 8-colour screens (as in many Psygnosis games), but we felt that it would be too restricting.

What next for Graftgold?
Well, it looks likely I'm finally going to get round to doing *Uridium (A stupendous C64 shoot-'em-up -Ed)* on the Amiga. It'll be a 32 colour, all singin' all dancin' affair. Then there's Steve, who has just completed *Realms* on the PC. He has been mumbling about doing his Spectrum *Avalon* games on the Amiga, but there's nothing concrete as yet. We've also just completed *Gods* on the Megadrive for the Bitmaps, and we're involved in some Gameboy bits and pieces. We don't really plan too much ahead, so who knows what the future holds?

UPPERS A platformer which isn't frightened to have a character of its own. Beautiful, evocative graphics and animation will warm your cockles, while the soundtrack and neat sound FX will send a shiver down your spine. Looks like Braybrook has come up with another classic.

DOWNERS A little sluggish at times (particularly the underwater level), and the parallax backdrops, although undeniably colourful, do tend to give the game an 'unfinished' look.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's getting a little overcrowded in the console-style platform games arena, but *Fire & Ice* holds its own – partly down to the unparalled attention to detail and excellent level design. Sure, there're shades of other games in there, but the end result has a refreshing identity all its own. Great fun.

88 PERCENT

Screen shots on IBM PC

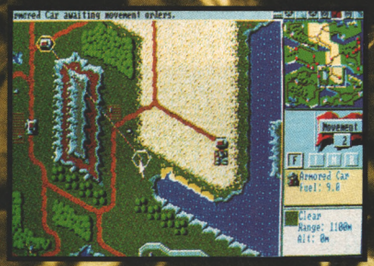
THE PERFECT GENERAL

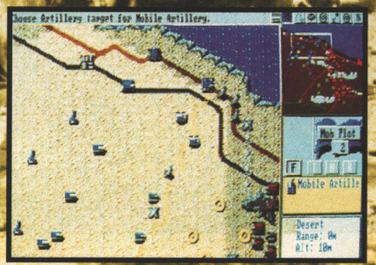
Based on a twelve year old tournament series, the game includes a highly refined yet very intuitive playing system

- Gorgeous playing field and landscapes
- Clean and simple interface
- Three difficulty levels
- You control every move and fire of your forces
- Superior artificial intelligence
- One or two players, human or computer, plus play by modem
- A wide range of intriguing scenarios
- The thrill and sounds of artillery, tanks and infantry in action

"The Perfect General" computer game is IBM PC and Amiga compatible.

Screen shots on IBM PC





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Ye gods! 21st Century resurrect an 8-bit classic, reshape it into a console game, and, it seems, hope for the best...

Game: Deliverance
Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment
Price: £25.99
Authors: Raf Cecco (design); Peter Verswyvelen (coding) & Kim Goossens (graphics) at Devinart
Release: Out now

We always feel slightly saddened, here at AMIGA POWER, when we come across a game with the finest of programming talent behind it, into which heaps of effort has clearly gone, and which seems like the answer to all our prayers the first few times we play it – only to find, after a couple of days of investigation, that it turns out to be, well, not quite 'all there'. (I do, anyway. I can't speak for the rest of those ruthless blighters.) Surely *Deliverance*, with the proven talent of Raf Cecco and a string of euphoric 8-bit reviews to back it up, won't suffer just such a fate? Read on...

For fans of the 8-bit versions, it goes without saying that *Deliverance* is a platform game with some chap walking around killing monsters. However, that's more or less where the similarity ends – not only is our hero now a large viking type (sort of George Bernard Shaw crossed with Noggin the Nog) instead of a dwarf, the very, erm, 8-bitty gameplay of the original has been replaced by something closely resembling that of an arcade machine. I doubt if Cecco had anything very much to do with this new version, to be honest – it's really quite a different game to his Spectrum and C64 originals.

Similarities? Well, there are some. Our hero still carries an axe, which he can swing around his head (for close combat) or heave vehemently across the screen (for long-range death-dealing). That's until the final level, anyway, at which point the game transforms itself, with mixed results, into a sort of scrolling shoot-'em-up.

Until then, however, things follow a pretty standard pattern with platforms, ladders and the rest of it. It's familiar stuff – particularly level one, which, with the addition of a few metallic bricks, would have the Bitmap Brothers demanding royalties.

What it doesn't share with *Gods*, particularly, is subtlety of gameplay – this is very surface stuff. True, every so often (on level one, at least) you'll come across these large wardrobe-type things which can be opened to reveal various things, but this hardly amounts to 'gameplay depth.' More often than not, all you'll find inside are even more evil spiders and bats, though once in a while you'll come across keys, which are needed to get through doors, and, if you get *really* lucky, fairies – and completely naked ones at that! *(Good Lord! – Ed.)* As it turns out, the aim of the game is actually to 'liberate' as many of these fairies as possible. (They've been captured by the evil Queen Bahd, you see, plunging the land into darkness etc.)

So this isn't a game of great depth, more an arcade-type thrill. To be honest, the scrolling and animation don't exactly set new standards of treacly smoothness – put *Deliverance* alongside, say, *Leander* to see how things should really be done – but who cares when the graphics have been designed as well as this? The backdrops are stunning in places, and way above average everywhere else. And the sprites are, well, brilliant. Not only are they beautifully drawn, but they're wonderfully imaginative too.

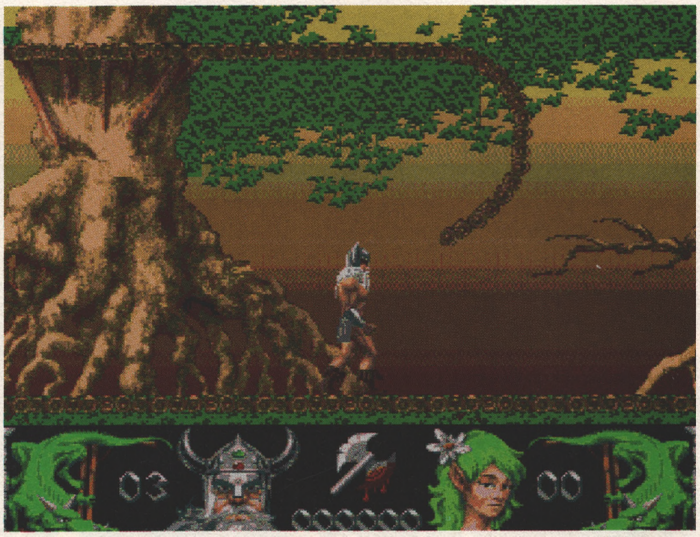
"Nothing beneath the surface"

That's really the main thing *Deliverance* has got in it's favour – the Baddy Factor. From the weird invisible men on level two to the strange stick people on level three – and the incredibly frightening insect things that accompany them – all the stops have been pulled out to give the most impressive baddies I've encountered since the General Election.

And if you're impressed by them, just wait till you see the end-of-level sequences! Blimey – you'll be knocked off your feet. They're absolutely astounding, real crowd pullers. Games in themselves, almost. Normally at AMIGA POWER we wouldn't ruin your fun by revealing the details of such things, but I've just got to or I'll burst. At the end of level one, for example, there's this... *(Snip! – Ed)* Aw. Just look at the picture below, okay?

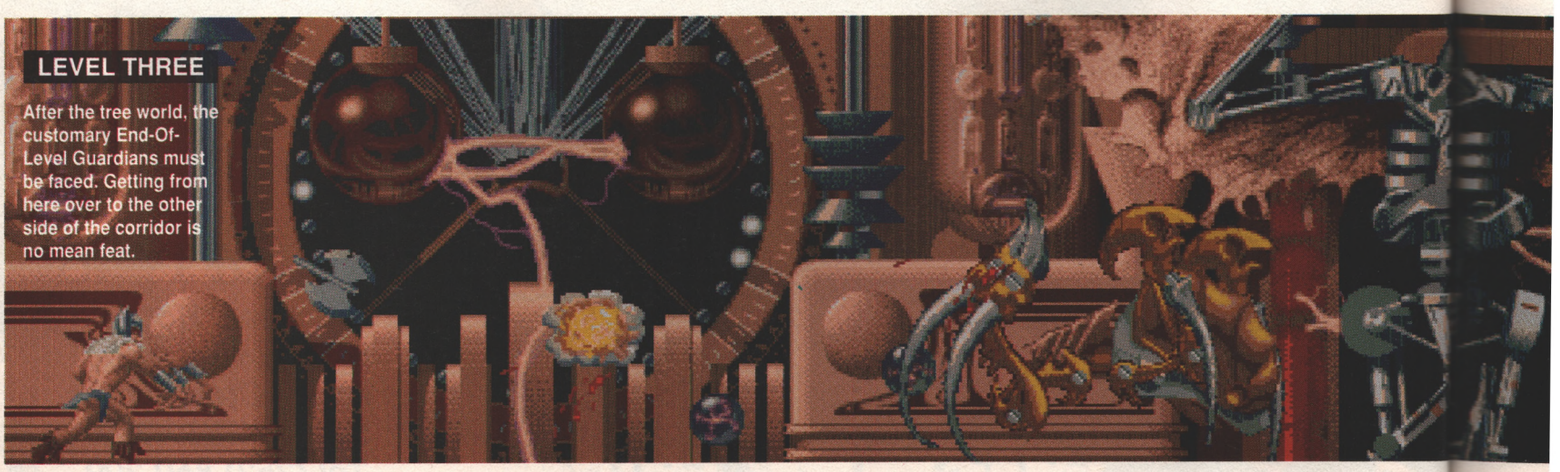
So what's the prob? It sounds positively splendid. Why the slightly-less-than-utterly-enthusiastic intro? What don't they tell us on the back of the box? Eh?

Well, nothing specific. It's a top-hole game and everything. It's just that, um,



Imaginative monsters and beasties abound in *Deliverance*. Take, for instance the tree world. Here even the platforms put up a fight! (Just like at Paddington Station, really.)

DELIVE



LEVEL THREE

After the tree world, the customary End-Of-Level Guardians must be faced. Getting from here over to the other side of the corridor is no mean feat.

THE BADDY FACTOR

You can't walk more than a couple of yards in *Deliverance* before being pounced on by a bunch of the weirdest baddies in computer-gaming history. The trick is to be prepared – stand there goggling and you'll be reduced to cinders before you can say "Oh dear".

SATAN'S CHIMPANZEES
(Level 1)

Obviously embittered by their rather unfortunate appearance, these ugly blighters exact their revenge by swinging from platform to platform and spitting fireballs at you. Four or five axe-blows should put a stop to their little game.

STICK PEOPLE
(Level 3)

Very odd, these. They start off as bits of tree, but snap off, fall to the ground and spout arms and legs. They then, for no apparent reason, start leaping about all over the place, succumbing without argument to your axe blade.

INVISIBLE(ISH) MEN
(Level 2)

These characters normally flit about harmlessly in the background, semi-invisible, but occasionally they 'materialise', whereupon it's best to knock them for six before they do the same to you.

LIVING PLATFORMS
(Level 3)

It's quite unnerving to be walking nonchalantly along a platform, suddenly to have it come alive beneath you feet and start attacking you. Jump clear and lay into it with your axe, though, and it should quieten down a bit.

(fidget fidget) there's always plenty going on, but I found myself wishing there was even more yet.

The baddies are terrific, really terrific. But there are only about three different sorts on each level, and once you've killed twenty or thirty of each you begin to wonder if, well, you know... And lobbing axes about is all very well, but I kept expecting to come across some sort of 'shop' (esp on level one). Your only chance to upgrade anything is on level four, where you can exchange the blobs you fire for bigger blobs.

Lose a life, and this rather unnerving little visual appears – a malevolent devil stands menacingly over your body.

CALL ME UNGRATEFUL BUT, ERM...

The crux of the problem is that, once you've uncovered each level's secrets, you're left with the prospect of re-uncovering them again (and again) until you reach the end. (And even then there's a load of disk accessing before the end-of-level sequence.) There's nothing hidden away beneath the game's surface for you to discover, no puzzles to solve or secret rooms to chance upon, and in the more-than-likely event of completing the game within a few days of buying it I can't imagine anyone wanting to play through it all over again.

And how about the competition? Say, *Gods*, *Switchblade II* and *First Samurai* (another Raf Cecco game, funnily enough). Three onto one might not be entirely fair, but they've got *Deliverance* cornered simply on account of having lots to do. *Deliverance* parries bravely with its benchmark graphics (some of best on the Amiga, no doubt about it) and sheer imagination, but it's not enough. The final blow is dealt. It slumps to the floor, mortally wounded. "But what about those end-of-level bits?" it gasps. "And the stick men things? And the scrolling section? And how about the... wheeze... cough..." Its three opponents raise their swords and cry as one: "Variety, that's the key."

Good stuff, then, but too thinly spread to be a real knock-out.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

UPPERS The graphics are really rather special – better, in fact, than in many arcade machines. And there's plenty of honest hacking/exploring action in here to back them up too.

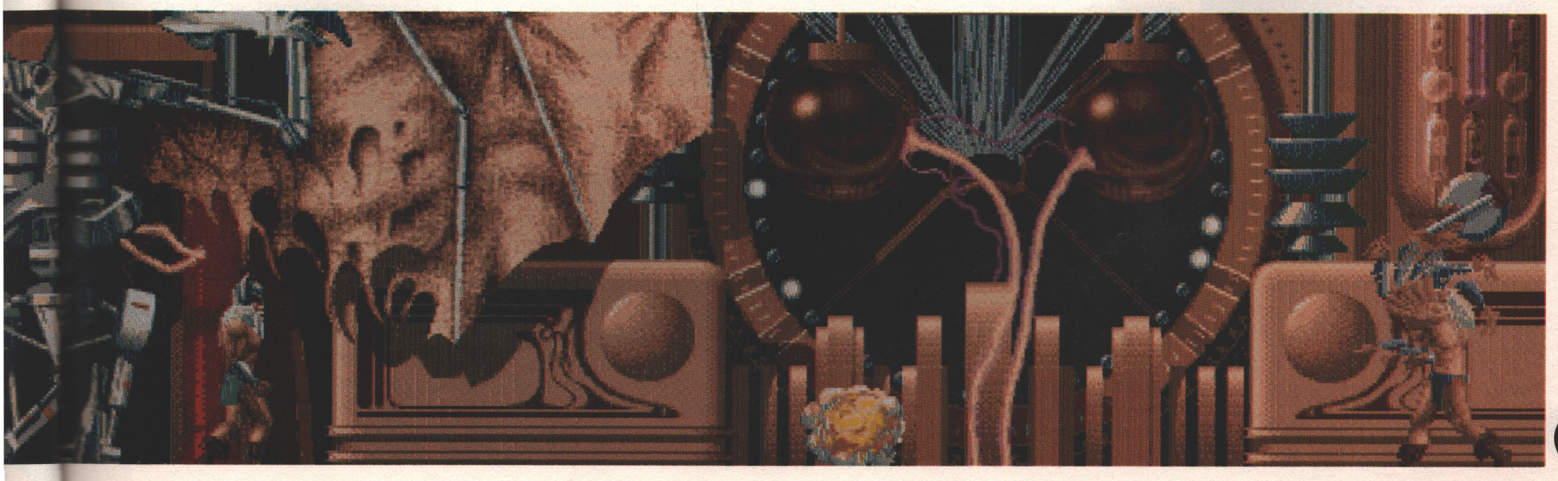
DOWNERS Look beneath the surface, however, and you'll be confronted by an empty void. There simply isn't enough to it to make this an out-and-out classic.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A gold star for visuals, but a "see me" for the underlying gameplay. All dressed up and nowhere to go.

75 PERCENT

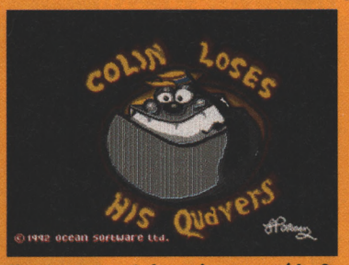
RANCE



A TASTE SENSATION

The problem with Pushover is that there isn't a very good connection between pushing dominoes and the Quavers snack. Ocean have obviously pondered this one, and decided the best way to get around the problem is to provide a natty intro sequence which somehow manages to tie-in an ant/dominoes game with Colin and his Quavers. It may be silly, and it may be tenuous, but it works – after a fashion – and you can't deny it both looks and sounds (you'll have to take our word on that one) rather groovy.

A picture's worth a fair old number of words though, so let's take a look at that intro sequence in full...



Here's everyone's favourite person (dog? pig?) called Colin, now in his very own game (sort of). Here's the intro sequence.

There he is, wandering along, minding his own business, grinning out at the camera and working up a mighty hunger.

Aha, what have we here but a crunchy Quaver! There's nothing for it – it's time for a quick snack, thinks our Col.

Wow, talk about a taste sensation! Colin goes all wobbly, knocked over by that incredible Quaver flavour!

But what's this? A diminutive Quavers fan realises that help is needed, and gets ready to dart to the rescue.

Phew! Caught Col just in time, but – oh no! – the pack of Quavers has fallen down that there hole. Cue the game...

Ocean's first original puzzler in years is this odd platform/dominoes mongrel.

PUSHOV

Game: Pushover
Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.99
Authors: Red Rat
Release: June

An Ocean game without a high profile established months before release? Without a six month build-up of stylish advertising? Without umpteen work-in-progress features? In other words, an old-fashioned, honest-to-goodness, hype-free original game? Well, no, not quite.

You see, *Pushover* may have been a bit hush-hush up until now, but a tie-in with Quavers (you know, the crisp things promoted by a bulldog called Colin with the voice of Lenny Henry) resulting in a half-million pound TV ad spend is certain to change all that. (Well, it worked for *Mario* and Walkers crisps.)

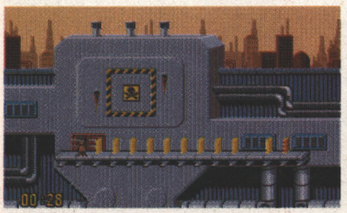
Oh great, you could be forgiven for thinking at this point, another of those half-baked cartoon game things, but this time featuring the dubious delights of Curly Colin, and maybe some digitised speech from our Lenny. Well, no actually – the TV hero only really enters into it during the intro sequence and on the occasional animated rest screens which offer the brain a bit of R&R. (The Quaver packs themselves have a slightly higher profile, actually appearing in the game themselves. Well, occasionally.)

No, the real hero of *Pushover* – the character the player controls – is, in fact, an ant (an escapee from Ocean's new *Sim* game, presumably), whose task it is to help Colin find his missing Quavers. And if he seems to have next-to-nothing to do with the famous curly snacks, wait until you see the basic game itself – a sort of arcade puzzle game featuring platforms, ladders and lots of toppling blocks. Imagine *Lemmings* crossed with dominoes and you won't be far out – the more you look at the game, the more obvious it becomes that Ocean had this scheduled for release anyway, and the Quavers connection is very much an (admittedly welcome) last minute add-on. Still, if it gets the game on TV...

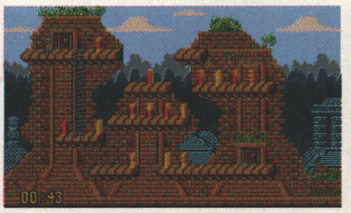
DOMINO DANCING

If I was the kind of reviewer who went on to explain exactly how the game works at this point, I'd tell you something like this. For a start, I'd let you know that the screens are littered with various types of domino, which, when pushed by another domino, react in assorted different ways. And I'd tell you that your task in the game is to topple all the dominoes on the screen by moving them about the place a bit (your ant can carry one domino at a time) and then knocking them all over in one go, against a time limit of course.

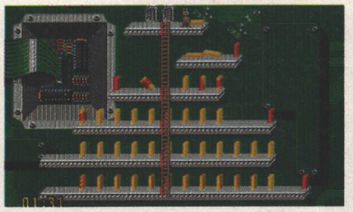
And since, of course, I *am* that kind of reviewer, I'll also go on to say that otherwise impossible looking screens are in fact do-able only because some dominoes actually defy gravity (when hit, they will rise until they bash into the underside of a platform above), while others will explode, leaving a hole in the platform on which they stand. Others split into two dominoes, some simply disappear, while one type continues rotating along the platform, instead of simply toppling over. Thankfully a chart of the various domino types can be called up at any time to remind you of what they all are.



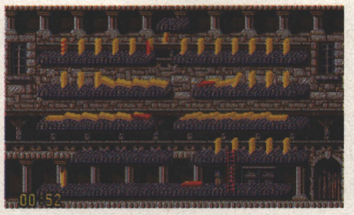
As you can see, the first screen isn't exactly the biggest challenge ever – but at least they've got the learning curve right.



By level 20 things, however, things are getting more than a little more complex. Nice Aztec scenery too.



And by stage 40, things are getting very tricky indeed. We seem to have progressed through time too – it all looks very hi-tech.

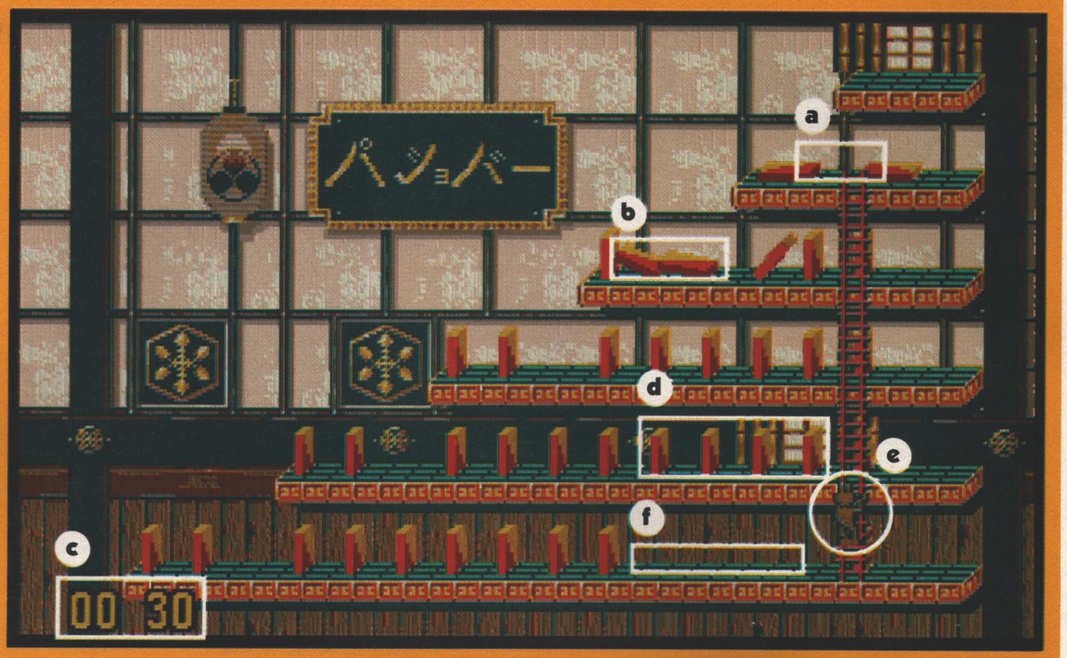


Here's level 60 – complete with Mediterranean looking columns. Frankly, it's all Greek to me. *(Oh dear – Ed.)*

IT AIN'T NO PUSHOVER

Here we are at level 90 of the game's 100 levels. Surprising, then, to find it's so easy...

a. This is where it all started. Our ant pushed this one solitary domino – time to cross your fingers and hope...
b. Here we can see the domino effect in, um, effect. The tumbling will continue in both directions along the platform, with one block toppling down onto the platform below to the left there.
c. The timer – always counting down (unless you use the crib screen – see below). The time allowed varies from screen to screen.
d. The dominoes here need to be transported to the area below, so that the chain reaction will continue to the target domino (hidden behind the bottom of the ladder). The fact that the sequence will topple these dominoes if left here means time is of the essence (as they say).
e. The hero of *Pushover* is this ant. A tad small and indistinct, isn't he?



f. This area here is where the dominoes need placing from above – and quickly!

This chart can be called up at any time (thankfully, the level countdown freezes) to display the full complement of domino types. Apparently the patterns on them are designed to be representative of what each block actually does, but, erm, we're not completely convinced. Still, with this handy crib-sheet, who needs to memorise them?

But is it ant-astic?

ER

All clear? No? Then let me talk you quickly through a sample screen. The objective, you see, is to knock over the target or 'trigger' domino (one with three horizontal stripes – so called because it triggers the exit) you see somewhere on the screen – and within a time limit. The fact that this must be the last domino hit (and no other may be still moving or left standing) and that, unlike the other doms, the target domino can't be moved about the screen at all, adds extra complications to an already complex game.

Completing the screen in the specified time (it varies between screens – the final one gives a ten minute countdown!) results in the player being awarded a token. These tokens can then be used to advance a level when you find one too tricky. Completing a screen outside of the time limit means either repeating the exercise or using a token to get any further.

Every level has a code (thank heavens) – here we see a friendly army of ants in the process of displaying it.

DOMINO THEORY

What we've got, then, is a game which relies on cause and effect. As only one domino push is allowed per screen, the bulk of the game sees you chasing around the platform and ladder networks, attempting to guess how each domino's fall will affect the next one, and shifting them about to get them to fall as you intend. All that's left to do, then, is select a domino to set the chain reaction in motion, hope for the best, and run for the exit. (Or that's true most of the time – in reality, some screens complicate things further by making you move some dominoes after the chain reaction has been initiated. Speed then becomes paramount.)

Of course, most of us are too thick to work out how each screen will work out in our heads all the time – in reality, play often throws pre-planning out of the window, replacing it with hunches, guesswork, and blind trial-and-error/suck-it-and-see tactics. After a few frustrating screens, the concept of Chaos theory seems that much more familiar...

"A pretty groovy little puzzler"

QUAVERING HEIGHTS

Decision time then – is it a hit (hurrah!) or a miss (boo!)? First let me make the obvious comment – yes, *Pushover* does look a bit like *Lemmings*, though as you play it the comparison soon retreats from your mind. No, if it really resembles something from Psygnosis, it's their yet-to-be-released *Tomato Game*. The idea of building up a stream of objects then setting the ball in motion (as it were) is almost identical. (Of course the execution differs greatly between the games, but the resemblance is there.)

That comparison firmly squashed, then, what else can we say about it? Well, I must admit my first reaction to *Pushover* was something along the lines of 'Oh, is that it?' – it didn't look like anything to write home about. A few more plays brought things to the level of 'Mmm, this game's got something'. Then there was the period of 'Pity about the dull graphics and tenuous (and slightly desperate) tie-in'. Finally I achieved oneness with it, at which point I attained the level of 'Hey, this is a pretty groovy little puzzler after all'.

Well, alright, it's not exactly a state of nirvana, is it? But then, I don't think *Pushover* is the sort of game which is capable of doing that. Sure, it's fun. And yeah, it's damned addictive. But *Pushover* is not a *Lemmings*, a *Populous*, or a *Monkey Island*. It's not an event, a landmark game, a humbling experience. It's just quite groovy, in it's own modest little way.

● ***MARK RAMSHAW***

UPPERS A strangely absorbing game style, which initially appears contrived and dumb, but soon becomes an obsession. One hundred levels and some variation in scenery should ensure lasting interest. A simple, straightforward control system too.

UPPERS The animation of the ant, while packed with character, is still distinctly dodgy in some areas. The colours look a bit flat, and the attempt at graphic stylisation just doesn't really work.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A very tenuous tie-in, which is nonetheless a fine puzzle game. Nothing classic, and it could have been presented better (though the intro is neat), but fine nonetheless.

79 PERCENT

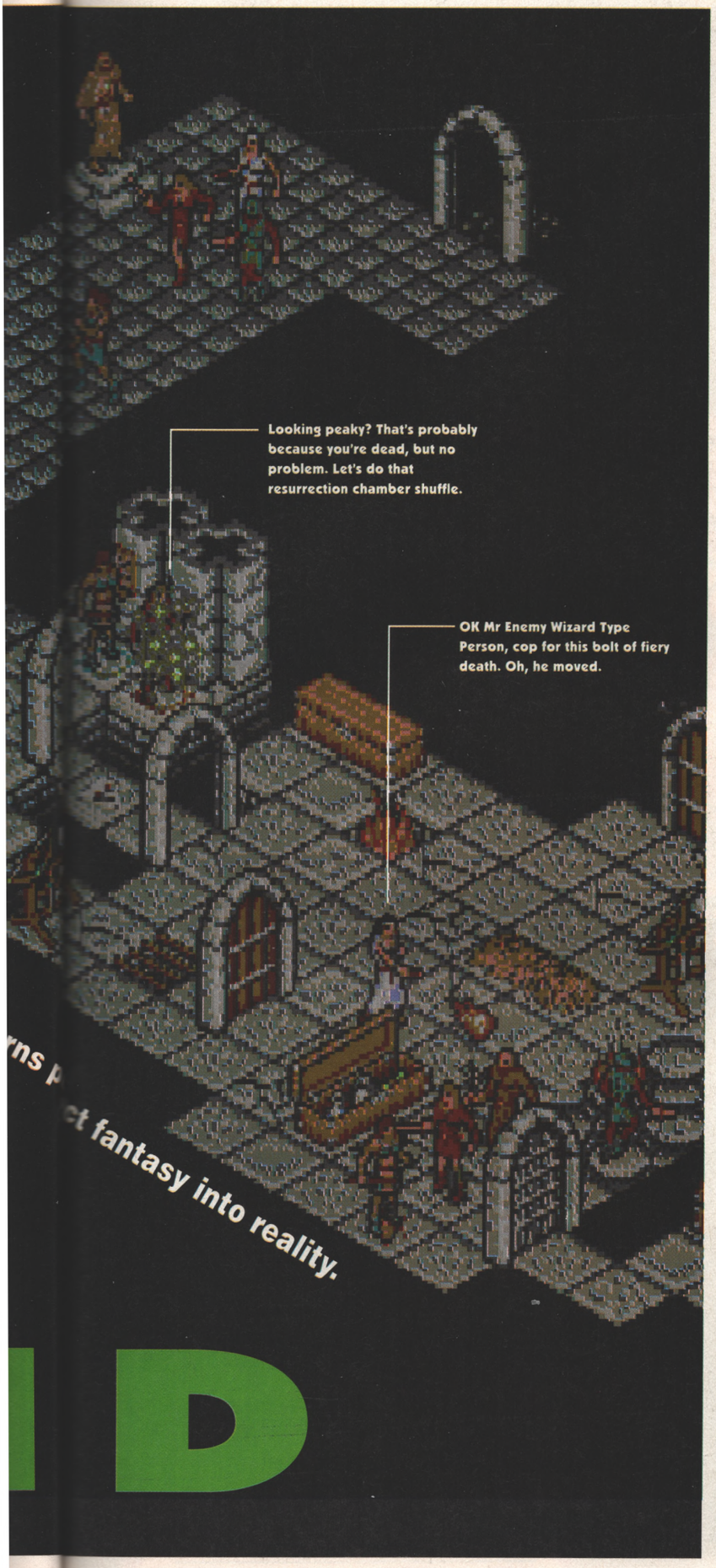
Just some of the giveaway goodies on offer when you shop at Treidhawyl – prices, and adventurers, slashed.

Oh lawks, a scrap. These random monster encounters can get a bit much.

Hmm, what have we here? A spare axe, a curious scroll and some boots. Let's nick 'em and scarper!

It's here! By presenting a huge and complex role-playing game as a cartoon, Legend turns p ct fanta

LEGEN



Game: Legend
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: £30.99
Authors: Anthony Taglione and Pete James
Release: Out now

Coming to this iso-dungeon fantasy romp fresh from a couple of similar swords and sorcery soirees in the shape of *Celtic Legends* and *Eye Of The Beholder 2*, I was quite prepared for this to be a fairly standard puzzle-and-bosh bash through the usual AD&D-inspired scenario.

Not so! *Legends* is something different. Indeed, *Legends* is something for which I can happily throw away the review rulebook and state, right here, right now, that it's a must, must buy. Why? Because it's such an utterly fabulous thing, that's why. There are few games that instantly grab my attention and keep me riveted to the screen, spending hours of otherwise profitable time just to see what happens next. And there are even fewer that feature a sheer open-endedness that inspires you to simply forget the plot and go off in your own direction (only returning when necessary to what the designer intended), just to enjoy the immense vista of adventure waiting there in the game world.

If I've not already done away with the need for the rest of this review – and the more discerning, who'll want to know exactly what the hell it is I'm raving about, should still be reading – here is, as precisely and concisely as I can, why you've got to buy this game.

"Super, smashing, lovely"

Let's start, and it's a very good place to start, with the plot. Evil and chaotic forces are out and about in the land of Trazere, doing their usual evil thang, and the entire population is typically witless in terms of dealing with it. The task of vanquishing this outbreak of malevolence is down to four heroic adventurers drawn from far and wide – essentially, you and your mouse. So what's new?

Well, for starters, there's the swings and roundabouts of character generation. Four elements – earth, air, fire and water – can be manipulated to equip members of the four-strong team of adventurers with appropriate attributes. There's a selection of berserker, runemaster, assassin and troubadour, each of whom needs different combinations of strength, dexterity, intelligence and the rest with which to clobber the Adversary. You can even choose the sex of each member – let's see more of this in computer games. (Indeed, it's something I immediately took advantage of.)

Right, so it's time for my four-girlie party to descend into the catacombs of Treihadwyl (the first part of the game), in which to battle foul monsters, solve tortuous puzzles and gain the means to progress to the next part of the adventure.

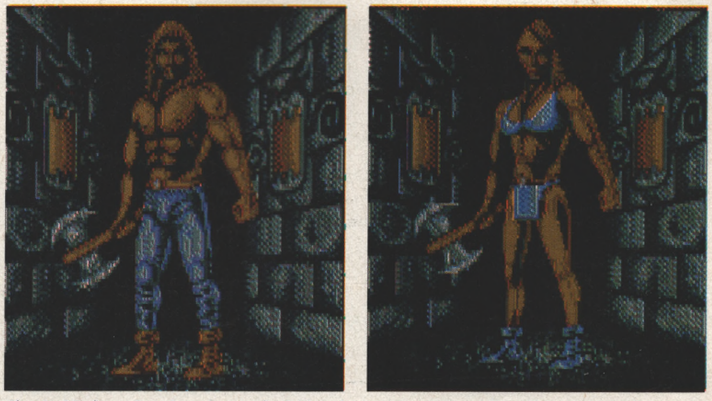
Each room of the cavern below Treihadwyl is isometrically rendered in impressive detail, the party members included. There are a few puzzles to work out before you can move on, but let's look first at a particularly impressive feature: auto-mapping. As you move through each corridor and room, a map is automatically sketched and can be called up at any time. Damn useful and much more fun than plotting on graph paper.

CHURCH OF THE FREE-WILLED MIND

And there's the character movement. Far be it from me to call it 'intelligent' – computers are still pretty thick – but the party members move around in a co-ordinated way, shifting out of the way of each other, in superbly animated routines. Then, when monsters come piling in, the whole thing goes into uproar as each figure on-screen runs about beating hell out of anything that looks unfriendly. It really is a hoot to watch.

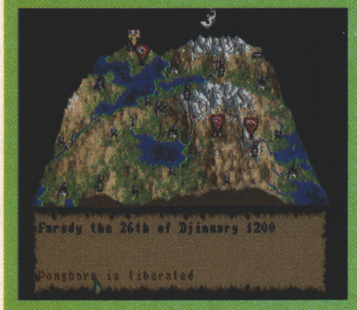
In battle, there are various character specialities that can be switched on from icon or keyboard. The berserker will go into a rage if provoked and run around mightily smiting; the assassin will hide in shadows, becoming a faint outline image and that much harder for monsters to hit; the troubadour will not only fight, but play a song (pretty versatile stuff). This isn't just for everybody's entertainment either. Songs, bought from a minstrel who roams the wider world, have different properties – party strength can be increased by a suitable ditty, or hit points are regenerated more rapidly to the strains of another.

However, it's the runemaster who is the most fun. He or she can mix and →



Tired of being a butch male warrior? Then how about being a butch female warrior?

HOW TO KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS



It's a big bad world out there, with enemy banners an ambush away.

Life in the great outdoors is a thing to be wary of. You'll find it's essential to go trooping off to various locations between quests, if only to buy some particularly necessary nightshade for the runemaster, but beware – there is great peril afoot.

For a start, marauding armies roam the landscape, with banners indicating their whereabouts. If you cross the path of one, you can try to hide or you can attack. And what did bolshy old me do? You guessed it – up and at 'em, ladies!

If this sounds foolhardy, well, yes it was, but maybe not quite as much as you think. You see, each banner insignia represents a different strength of army, from the weedy Kestrel to the eminently avoidable Skull – before attacking I'd checked out their strength and knew I had at least a fighting chance.

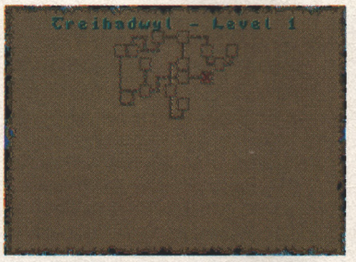
In combat, the view switches from the world map to an isometric outdoors tactical screen, similar in layout to the dungeon screen. This is when the fun starts. Enemy monsters come rushing in in droves and each character is hard-pressed to stave the critters off. It's the runemaster who needs the most attention, accessing the spell menu frequently to blast shades out of the opposition while casting healing spells on his or her beleaguered compatriots. If you beat them, your army will leave gold and magic items behind it which can make life a lot easier in further dungeon encounters. But reckon on losing at least two party members per encounter – and if one is the runemaster, it's unlikely you'll get very much further in the game.

cast spells possessed of an incredible variety of functions. Damage missiles, spells of enslavement, healing spells, protection from magic spells, they're all available. The main thing here is that you are not limited to a set roster of enchantments. The superb magic system (see the separate box) means that hundreds of spells, most of which you must invent yourself, are possible just by combining the ingredients available. This is a first for a fantasy game; a wizard unrestricted by hard and fast rules on what magical powers can be exercised. You're not even limited by the runemaster's level of ability – so long as you have the ingredients and the appropriate runes, which can be bought from a wizened character called The Ancient, the most complex and destructive spells can be wrought.

There're also a fair few magic items to be collected in the dungeon. Wands, potions, rings, scrolls and bits of magic armour are littered about in abundance, many of which have pretty spectacular effects, but which must be sussed out either through trial and error or explained by the aforementioned Ancient. Any oddments picked up are stored and accessed via an inventory screen, which also gives statistics on how each character is faring. It's best to keep a close eye on whatever booty you've got as some items are needed to complete other dungeons, while armour and weaponry can be sold for a fair old whack to town-based traders.

Character control is a doddle. Click on the character icon, click on where you want it to go and off it trots. Shunting individual members around is important for some of the puzzles and traps, as they often require a character to stand on a particular slab of stone while another operates a lever to open a door or to stop spikes from nobbling the party's progress. More often than not, the puzzles are real swines to solve – level two of Treidhawyl had me cursing for hours as I tried to gain access to a room containing a vital ornate key for use in another part of the dungeon. As usual, the runemaster played the vital role, but the spell needed to resolve the situation is not at all obvious.

And that's not all. Throughout all the dungeon-trawling, monster-bashing, puzzle-solving, treasure-grabbing hoo-hah, there's still the opportunity to zip out into the overworld and do a bit of trade. Having thrashed a few monsters and nicked their gold, it can be exchanged for better armour at the blacksmith, magic items at the artificer, spell ingredients at the apothecary or a prayer for better luck. Better resistance to otherwise lethal blows is available at the temple and, for the terminally luckless, resurrection of dead party members is free. Tramping from village to town to village can also lead the party into conflict with enemy armies – best avoided in the early stages of the game as they're pretty tough to overcome.



Hurrah and huzzah for auto-mapping. Now then, *where* did you say that exit was?

In all, *Legend* offers an immense and complex game which looks good, is easy to play at whatever level you fancy tackling it, and is hugely absorbing. There's great action, boggling brain-teasers and a versatile plot, all of which make it perhaps the most enjoyable RPG yet. As I said before, definitely make it one to add to your collection.

EVERY LITTLE THING IT DOES IS MAGIC!

The main strength of *Legend* is, for me, the slick and versatile magic system. It's the runemaster who wields the wand and can quickly become the most powerful character in any party, not by slogging sequentially through experience levels, but by good old-fashioned capitalism.

Gold is used to buy runes and arcane ingredients, which must be combined to create spells – aside from the state of your finances, there is no other restriction on the type of spells that can be brewed. Nor is the runemaster limited by the quantity of runes or ingredients that can be carried.

It's the combinations possible that really make this magic system, well, magic. Simple spells – such as a director and damage rune, plus the appropriate ingredients for a damage missile – can be mixed with other concoctions to create hugely complex effects. As an experiment, I tried mixing a surround spell with damage and missile spells – and wished I hadn't when it all went off! The battlefield exploded and fireballs whooshed out in all directions, totalling the opposition. It's just a pity the rest of my party was standing in the way while runey-babes did her smart-bomb routine, but, hey, I'll know better next time. Sorry girls.

Alternatively, and a little less upsetting for the rest of the adventurers, you could try mixing something along the lines of a heal-antimage-surround-enslavement-continuous spell. This heals the runemaster, protects him or her from magic, makes all the creatures around fight for you and is re-cast continuously until dispelled or the party leaves the room. And this isn't the most complicated thing you can come up with either – the possibilities go on and on.

Add to this the magic items that can be found or bought – an amber wand fires a damage missile, a serpent ring heals, a cloud potion gives teleport abilities – and, quite simply, you're looking at the best, most comprehensive, most versatile magic system ever seen in an Amiga RPG.

Take a rune, a wing of bat, mix them up and shoot your cat. (Erm...)

Let's just check what spells are in reserve – ah, best pop out for more ingredients.

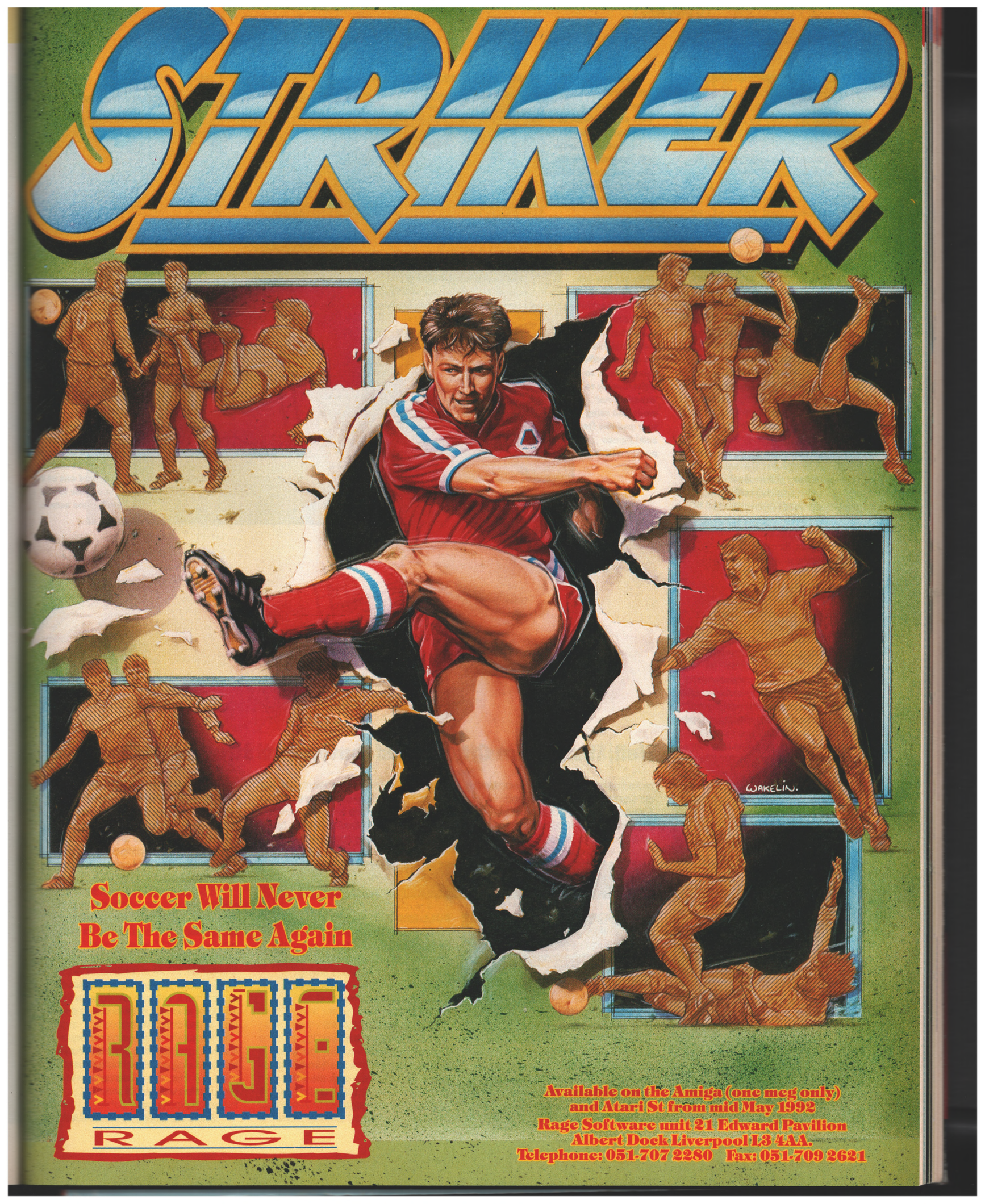
UPPERS Fabulous graphics, an easy interface and the right combination of action and strategy. Better than *Ultima VI* for first-time RPGers too – you'll lose sleep over this, for sure.

UPPERS The characters can look a little silly when running about ("...they call it Madness") and are inclined to get in each others' way. Otherwise this is pretty much a fault-free zone.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Super, smashing, lovely. A real ground-breaker, great fun, completely non-linear (and, because of that, in possession of one of the most believable game worlds to date), it fully deserves to sit right at the top of its generic heap. At the risk of rubbing the message in yet again, a must buy.

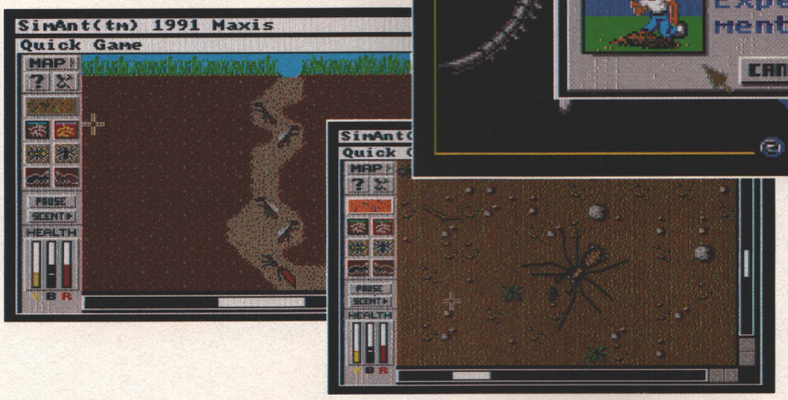
91 PERCENT


STRIKER
WAKELIN.
Soccer Will Never
Be The Same Again
RAGE
RAGE
Available on the Amiga (one meg only)
and Atari St from mid May 1992
Rage Software unit 21 Edward Pavilion
Albert Dock Liverpool L3 4AA.
Telephone: 051-707 2280 Fax: 051-709 2621

Game: SimAnt
Publisher: Maxis (Ocean)
Price: £34.99
Authors: Will Wright & Justin McCormick (design), Brian Conrad (programming), and others
Release: Out now

Here's you – the little yellow ant – near the start of a quick game. Looks like there's really only one way out, doesn't it? (Though you could always dig a new tunnel.)

***SimAnt*: the start-up screen. Now which type of game shall we play? (You can't deny you get a lot of options for your money with this one.)**



Red ants ahoy! These are your enemies in the game. You're going to have to resist flipping to 'experimental' mode and using your god-like (to ants) human powers at this point...

The spider – a vicious enemy for one ant, a source of food for a bunch of them, and one of the first outside forces you'll come across.

SIM A

Well, it's no *Sim City*. Maxis continue to struggle in the shade of (

Dear oh dear. You have to worry about Maxis. With each new release it becomes harder and harder to avoid the fact that they're shaping up to be the archetypal one-hit wonders.

Consider: *Sim City* was one of the true originals, an immensely playable, undoubtedly original product of the type that only comes along every few years – a game that seems so obviously *right* that you're amazed nobody'd done anything like it before. Even now it's still riding high in the AMIGA POWER All-time Top 100 – dodgy programming notwithstanding – goodness knows how many years later, and that's almost purely on the strength of the basic concept. With it, Maxis had well and truly arrived.

After it came *SimEarth*, an even more ambitious project – imagine, control the entire history of the planet in one game! – which sounded brilliant, looked great, and proved (even on the fast PCs it was meant for) to be a real pig to play. The game was just too large, with too much going on, for anybody to get a reasonable grasp on – and a lot of people persevered, none of whom (to our knowledge) ultimately found it a rewarding experience. Perhaps needless to say, it's caused untold problems in conversion to the Amiga, and when (or, indeed, if) we'll see it at all is a moot point.

And now we've got *SimAnt*. Hmm. We'd hoped for quite a bit from this. 'It's much more playable,' people seemed to be saying, 'there's much more of a game in there.' Well, perhaps. What they hadn't mentioned was how sloppily put together it all is. Not only are the icons used some of the most indistinct, crappiest little things we've seen in ages (intuitive? Get outta here!), making play very hard to get into, but there's a terrible two second (sometimes longer) delay between you clicking anywhere on screen and something actually happening. Time and again we clicked twice on an icon (or clicked a second time elsewhere), thinking our first attempt hadn't registered somehow, when all of a sudden the display would go mad, the program finally getting around to responding to our first command. Very annoying. Worse still, our boxed, finished copy seemed to lock up more than once. Faith in the game was almost immediately undermined.

The other thing nobody told us was how unfocussed it all is. Oh, sure, they've put a 'quick' mode in, which turns the game into a fairly simple ant-based strategy thing, but still the oodles of options, potted snippets of ant history and myriad different viewpoints available give the impression of lots of parts rather than a cohesive whole.

If *SimAnt* is meant to be a sort of modern executive toy – to be called up for a few idle minutes on your work PC, mucked about with for a bit, and then forgotten – it might be reasonably entertaining. There are, after all, lots of different bits to look at. (Indeed, in the manual Maxis themselves call *SimAnt* not a game, but a 'software toy. Toys, by definition, are much more flexible and open ended than games.')

For your average Amiga owner, however, used to sitting down and burying himself in a big game like this for many hours at a time, with a fixed purpose in mind, it offers a confused and frustrating experience.

There's another problem too. Unlike

THREE WAYS TO PLAY:

When you first start the game you'll be presented with three playing modes to chose between. They are:

QUICK GAME
The most arcadey way to play it, if you can imagine that. You control a black ant colony, faced with natural hazards (getting crushed by human feet, getting eaten by spiders etc) while competing with a colony of red ants for control over a patch of back yard. Fairly simple strategy stuff with interesting ant bits thrown in.

Oh dear, you've just died. (You'll find this happens lots no matter which type of game you play.) Not to worry though – as long as the colony's healthy you can just hatch a new ant body and start again.

FULL GAME
Pretty much the same thing on a (much) larger scale. You have to take over the entire backyard and house, section by section, while facing tougher adversaries (especially humans and their insecticides).

EXPERIMENTAL GAME
This is probably the bit you'll play around with most – it puts you, as a God-like human, in a position where you can muck about with the ants, building mazes for them, adding food, putting rival ants together or whatever.

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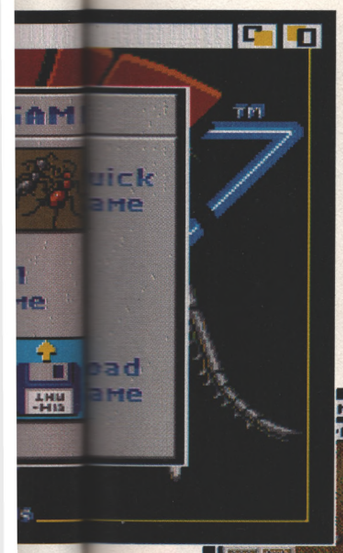
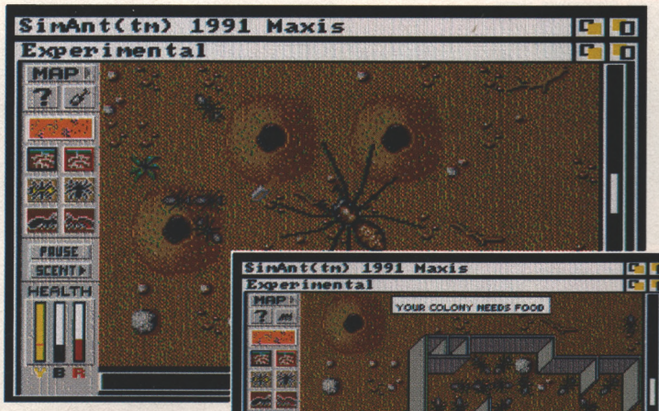




It's that spider again, this time right on top of the entrance to an ant's nest. Let's flip to 'experimental' mode – where you don't play an ant, but a human *playing* with ants – and play god...

Let's build a wall for starters (a bit higgledy piggledy, but it'll do) and see what happens. Well, the spider seems to have wandered off, but we've trapped an awful lot of ants in there...

Hey, look, the spider's back – but all the ants seem to have gone. (I'm not quite sure where yet.) Let's flip back to the experimental menu and see how I can torture them some more...

ANT

of (arguably) one of the ten most original games of all time.

in *Sim City*, where there really wasn't an end to the game – it could go on forever – this does have finite borders, effectively limiting the thing's lastability. I've not managed this yet – truth be told, I just can't bring myself to persevere for that long – but people I know have apparently completed Full Game mode (the central section of the game, where you're asked to take over an entire house and back yard, killing off rival ant colonies and driving the human residents out) on the PC in about four hours. This doesn't seem to offer the endless gameplay possibilities you might have hoped for. Basically, if you get the impression that I didn't enjoy *SimAnt* much, you're right.

Of course, it's perfectly possible I'm being completely unfair about all this. There are, indeed, people I know and whose judgement I generally trust who say either, 'yes, the game's OK, not brilliant, but OK' or, in some extreme cases, 'yes, it's an absolute cracker'. You may find you agree with them and not me.

"A confused and frustrating experience"

After all:

a) I don't find ants fascinating (as many people do), I find them intrinsically very boring and limited creatures. A game featuring them would have to go some to entertain me.

b) I find 'software toys' – lacking, as they do, fixed set purposes and regular gameplay rewards – all too often dull and unsatisfying. My attention span isn't all that long – I need to be teased and manipulated by a game, not given room to move around doing what I want (what I want will invariably be to switch the game off and go and watch telly instead).

c) I tend to get very frustrated by sloppy programming, particularly the sort that results in long loading breaks during gameplay or delays between you telling a program to do something and it actually responding and doing it.

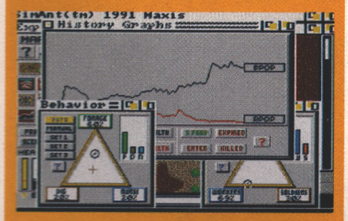
All of which – you could say – makes it unlikely I'd go a bundle on the game in the first place. So fine, ignore what I say. If you love ants, like not just the idea of software toys (I think they're in theory a fabulous idea) but the practice too, and can put up with frustrating delays/sloppy programming, you may just love *SimAnt*. You may even find you're hooked on it, as many people have become hooked on *Sim City* or *Railroad Tycoon*. But I'll promise you one thing – there aren't going to be all that many of you. There are just too many things wrong with *SimAnt* – much of it in the execution, though the design's far from perfect either. As it is, it's an often mysterious, occasionally intriguing, constantly annoying and – ultimately – strangely unsatisfying way to spend your time.

● *MATT BIELBY*

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR MAXIS?

As *SimAnt* – and the upcoming (on the Amiga) *SimEarth* – would seen to indicate, Maxis have lost their way rather, and it doesn't look like they're out of the woods (or, in this case, soil) quite yet. Indeed, you could make a strong argument for the second best 'Sim' game of all (*Sim City* being a all-time great, of course) not being a Maxis product at all, but Sid Meier's *Railroad Tycoon*, published by MicroProse, which took one small section of *Sim City* and zoomed in on it, rather than (as Maxis themselves seem determined to persevere at) trying to do simply far too much all at once. It wasn't too shoddily programmed either.

Happily though, things seem to be moving in the right direction once again. A real 'SimTrain' is on the cards, and future products seem to be more along those sort of tightly-focussed lines, which sounds promising (God forbid a 'SimUniverse', which was where things were heading). We await with interest, as they say.



Windows opening upon windows – *SimAnt* can easily look incredibly similar to the software we use to put this magazine together at times...

UPPERS Well, some people find ants very intriguing, or so I'm told. You can't deny the scope or ambition of the game, and the manual – packed as it is with ant information, ant history and (yes!) ant jokes – is a real treat.

DOWNERS The execution is sloppy, fiddly, annoying and sometimes a combination of all three. The point of it all is strangely elusive too. And you're really going to need a hard drive.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're really intrigued by the behaviour of ants, *SimAnt* might well appeal (indeed, it'll be your dream come true). However, if you harbour any doubts at all about whether you'll enjoy it, you're more than likely not to. Whatever you do, don't expect a game as appealing as *Sim City* – it just ain't going to happen.

59 PERCENT

DIZZY'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

Game Dizzy's Excellent Adventures
Publisher Code Masters
Authors Various
Price £24.99
Release Out now

Excellent! Will that do? *(No, of course it bloody won't. Get on with it. And while I'm at it, don't you think the old 'Oh well, I suppose I'd better write a bit more then' gambit is getting just a little tired by now? I mean, can't you come up with something just a little bit more original once in a while? It's not much to ask, especially when there's so much potential here to be eggsploited – arf! See, there's crap egg-type puns for a start, millions of 'em. So get cracking! Arf! Even when you've finished those, there's tons of stuff for a hard-boiled – arf! – reviewer to get stuck into in this compilation of five – count 'em! – gorgeous Dizzy games, only one of which has previously been available anywhere else. I mean to say, you could easily start off with a quick recap on* Kwik Snax, *which we covered as part of the* Dizzy Collection *compilation back in issue eight's compilation special, where we called it 'tricky, pretty and entertaining' and gave it four – count 'em! – stars. You could tell anyone who didn't remember that it's a slickly presented and unusual puzzle game, with elements of the ancient coin-op game* Pengo *and really cute graphics. You could say that, taken individually as a game that effectively costs a fiver, it'd easily be worth, say, 80 percent. – Ed.)*

BURN DOWN THE DISCO, ETC

But – *(And after that, you could perhaps, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, write just a few words about the other arcade puzzle game on the compilation,* Panic Dizzy. *You could note that it's been improved from the iffy 8-bit versions for the Amiga release, most crucially by the addition of a two-player head-to-head competition mode, which adds a bit of lastability to what's otherwise a pretty limited and repetitive game where there seems to be very little opportunity to bring any skill to bear on the game's outcome. And if I know your reviewing style, you'd probably conclude with something along the lines that the almost total reliance on chance – and the fact that once things start to go wrong, your chances of putting them right again decrease very rapidly – meant that the game wasn't really worth more than a few occasional plays. Still, I know you don't like to be too mean to the Codies – did this month's cheque come through okay, incidentally? – so you'd more than likely give it a pretty soft mark considering it was only £5, say somewhere in the vicinity of 56 percent – Ed.)*

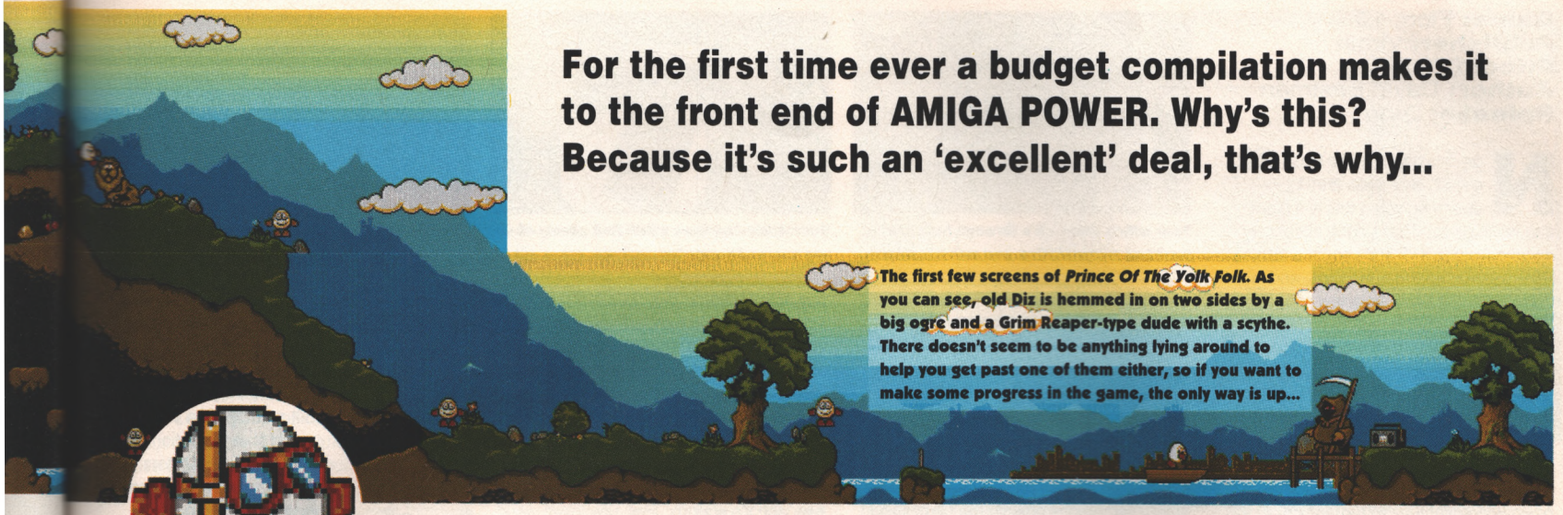
I JUST CAN'T FATHOM IT OUT

Yeah, but – *(Of course, anyone with any journalistic training at all would probably take the opportunity for a slick link into* Bubble Dizzy *at this point, noting the progression from puzzle game with arcade overtones – ie* Kwik Snax *– to arcade reaction-test game with puzzle overtones – ie* Panic Dizzy *– to pure arcade game with just a hint of a puzzle, as in* Bubble Dizzy. *That same hypothetical person would almost certainly chuck in a couple of throwaway plot lines about how this game fills in the missing link between* Treasure Island Dizzy *and* Fantasy World Dizzy, *covering the bit where Diz had to swim to* Fantasy World *after being forced to walk the plank by nasty pirate Captain Blackheart following his escape from* Treasure Island. *Then they'd probably go on to describe the incredibly simple and yet highly addictive gameplay, which involves Dizzy standing on air bubbles rising from the bottom of the sea and jumping between bubbles and ledges to avoid falling back down when the bubbles randomly burst, at the same time avoiding deadly marine life, collecting oxygen to survive longer and picking up pearls to repair the necklace for Dizzy's sweetheart Daisy that had been scattered when Cap'n Blackheart threw our hero overboard. If they were really on the case,*

Things are looking a bit rough for player two here, but – hey! – don't Panic, Dizzy!

What can you say about *Spellbound Dizzy*? Well, at least it's not a football game...

For the first time ever a budget compilation makes it to the front end of AMIGA POWER. Why's this? Because it's such an 'excellent' deal, that's why...



The first few screens of *Prince Of The Yolk Folk*. As you can see, old Diz is hemmed in on two sides by a big ogre and a Grim Reaper-type dude with a scythe. There doesn't seem to be anything lying around to help you get past one of them either, so if you want to make some progress in the game, the only way is up...

***Bubble* – get busy with the Dizzy.**

this person might then draw comparisons with the central gameplay concepts of Rainbow Islands, Nebulus *and the legendary Speccy classic* Underwurlde, *and conclude that this was a brilliant little game whose appeal might perhaps wane a little after all the levels had been completed – probably not all that mammoth a task – but that it was the kind of thing that absolutely everyone would enjoy in the meantime, especially if they turned up the fabby calypso music while they played. This imaginary reviewer would quite possibly feel moved, by the same criteria as before, to award* Bubble Dizzy *a mark in the region of, ooh, 85 percent – Ed.)*

I'M HAVING A FUNNY SPELL...

Okay, so – *(I can't believe that you couldn't find anything interesting to say about* Spellbound Dizzy, *either. Okay, so it's another game in the classic Dizzy formula, with lots of platform-leaping and puzzle-solving as seen before in* Treasure Island, Fantasy World *and* Magicland, *but this one's bigger than the last two put together, so there's at least one interesting point to latch onto straight away. You could show how the character of Dizzy has been developed a little in this game, with lots of little animations and pirouetting jumps and so on, although admittedly after that you'd probably have to slip into the old tried-and-trusted 'Well, it's not really very different from the others, except in the slightly-less-cutesy-cartoony visual department, so if you liked that kind of thing, this would be the kind of thing you'd like'. Still, on the grounds of size, I would imagine you'd still be looking at a score around the 76-ish mark. – Ed.)*

CRAP 'YOLK' JOKE-FREE ZONE

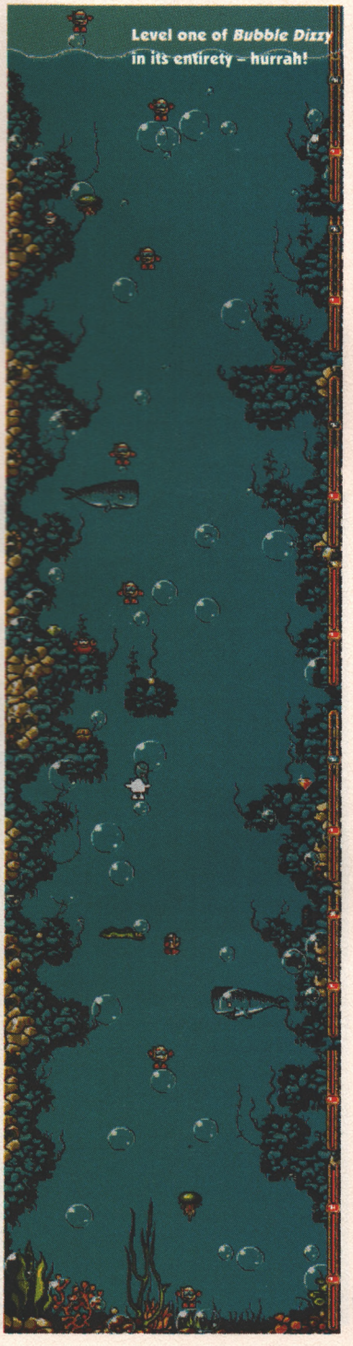
Look, can I – *(Fair enough, I guess that'd leave you a little bit stuck for constructive comment on the final game in the pack,* Dizzy – Prince Of The Yolk Folk. *Still, you could always waffle on a bit to fill space at the start, maybe drop into one of your usual gratuitous ranting bits about something connected to the game only in some impossibly tenuous way, or perhaps relate some implausible anecdote about how you were walking down the street the other day when you bumped into Paul Gascoigne or someone like that, who said "Why aye Stu, have you heard about the latest Dizzy game? I've just been playing it and I must say it's probably the nicest one yet, with really atmospheric graphics, (albeit that they could have come from any one of the three previous Dizzy arcade adventures), and that great mix of platform action and brain-teasing that's made the other games in the series so popular". By the time it came around to the conclusion, you'd only have to say that this was probably the second-best game on the pack after* Bubble Dizzy, *although maybe the formula was beginning to show its age, but at the end of the day the kids would go for this one in a big way again like they did all the other times, so it was worth a good 82 percent or thereabouts, and the review would be finished! So stop complaining and get reviewing, why don't you? – Ed.)*

"Why not go out and buy it?"

Er, okay then. *Dizzy's Excellent Adventures – (Snip! – Ed.)*

● ***STUART CAMPBELL***

I don't know about *Kwik Snax* – it'd take me ages to eat that many cherries...



Level one of *Bubble Dizzy* in its entirety – hurrah!

UPPERS A good varied mix of game styles, and certainly not lacking in the value-for-money department. Even the weakest title (*Panic Dizzy*) is worth a good few plays, and the best one (*Bubble Dizzy*) is an pure arcade game up there with the best of 'em.

DOWNERS Um... well, I daresay some of you out there would rather have one really stunning full-price game than five nifty but not quite so astonishing cheapies. But – hey! – it's a free country.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A great compilation, and even the one previously-available game deserves a wider audience than it had before, so, er, why not go out and buy it? (Basically.) And on the grounds of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts, I'm going to give it...

84 PERCENT

Game: Floor 13
Publisher: Virgin
Price: £30.99
Author: David Eastman
Release: June

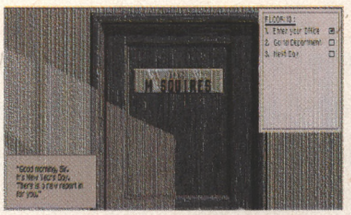
Lies, murder, corruption, scandals – it's a wonder nobody ever did a government

FLOOR 13

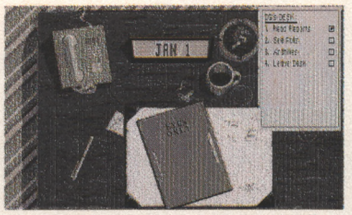
Now this one really *is* unusual. For a start, your eyes aren't deceiving you – this is a black and white game. That's right, absolutely no colour at all. At first it seems a bizarre, almost completely loopy choice, and one that's bound to put quite a few people off. Don't let one of them be you though – beneath this unusual monotone surface lies an ambitious game set in a world where the line between good and evil is very blurred indeed.

This is, you see, one of the few – perhaps the first – political conspiracy thrillers available on the Amiga. Using a basic text-adventure-with-graphics structure, it tells a tale of political intrigue not a million miles from TV shows like House Of Cards or Edge Of Darkness or films like Defence Of The Realm or '60s classic The Ipcress File. In the wake of a General Election that featured its fair share of smear campaigns and political skulduggery we should all be in the mood for it too.

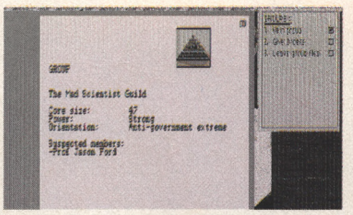
So what's it all about? Well, on the surface, *Floor 13* seems to put you in the role of a shadowy secret agent character, head of a mysterious organisation operating from behind the cover of a fictitious government ministry. Your mission is to popularise and keep in power a political party (fairly obviously the Conservatives, though they're not named as such in the game), the bulk of whose members are completely unaware of your existence. Not only do you get to run smear campaigns against the Opposition (and, indeed, any other opponents you may come up against), you get to kill them too. Indeed, there's no dirty trick you can't try as you attempt to get your way. Intrigued? You will be...



Your office door – it's through here that a world of manipulation and murder begins.



Your desk – on here you'll find plenty of top secret reports for analysis.



Here's trouble – The Mad Scientist Guild. You can be sure they're up to no good.

FISHY BUSINESS IN CENTRAL OFFICE

At the game's start you've recently been made Director General of The Ministry for Agriculture and Fisheries (the cover organisation) – but pay no attention to this, it doesn't really exist. Instead, your department consists of various assassins, spies and other operatives – your real role is to protect the government at all costs, with whatever means are at your disposal. Every 20 days (game time) a national political poll is taken, you see, and it's your job to keep the government ahead of the other main party at all times. The Prime Minister will call on you frequently to either criticise or praise your actions, but whatever you do, make sure your machinations are kept out of the public eye. Nothing must be traced to the government or your department. As long as your party are at least holding their own in the polls, the game continues.

"Where it scores is the feeling of realism"

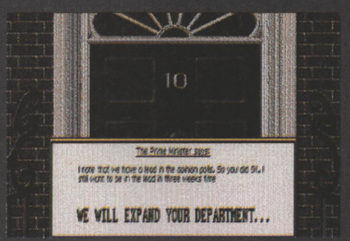
Interesting stuff then, but wait! There's more. You see, the game really comes alive when an extra twist is brought into play. Unknown even to the Prime Minister, you're also a member of a cult secret organisation, 'The Secret Masters' – more important than keeping your political party in power, your primary aim is to serve them, undertaking the various tasks they set you.

So how do you do this? Well...

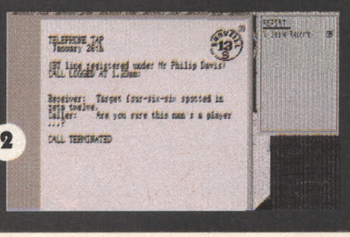
a) For a start, you must remain in your current job – only then will you have the power to help your hidden masters. Indeed, furthering your political career will give you more power with which to help

THE TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE...

Hidden away on the mysterious floor 13 of the Ministry Of Agriculture And Fisheries you'll find the tools of political skulduggery at your disposal. They start powerful, but get better with time – for each 20 day poll that comes in showing a government lead, the Prime Minister will reward you by expanding your dirty tricks facilities.

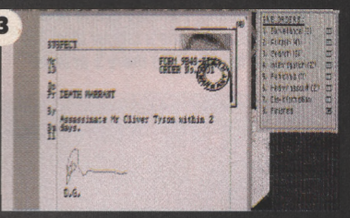


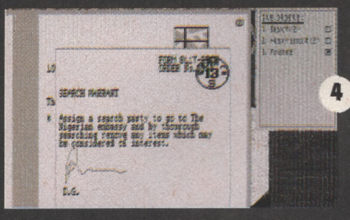
1 Pursuit: Following a suspect to get info on him is always a good tactic, especially when you find he's popping in and out of Soho massage parlours all the time!



2 Surveillance: Always useful to keep tabs on suspects. Spread the dirt using information gained by bugging their phones and (!) bedrooms!

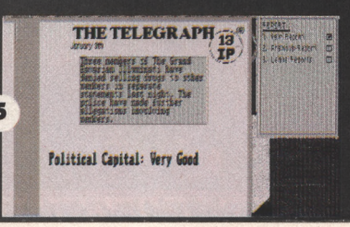
Removal: Initially, you start out with only two assassins at your disposal, so don't get carried away knocking off everyone who causes trouble. (Save that for when you're really powerful and you've got a decently sized death squad!) **3**

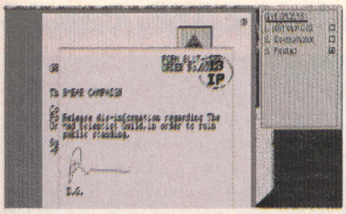




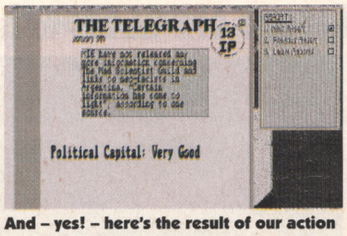
4 Search: If you're after some interesting information or secret documents, just send a search party in to turn a suspect's home or office over. (Easy, isn't it?)

Dis-information: This is one of our favourites. By using this facility you can discredit anyone. And if you can't find anything to smear them with, why not just make it up? **5**

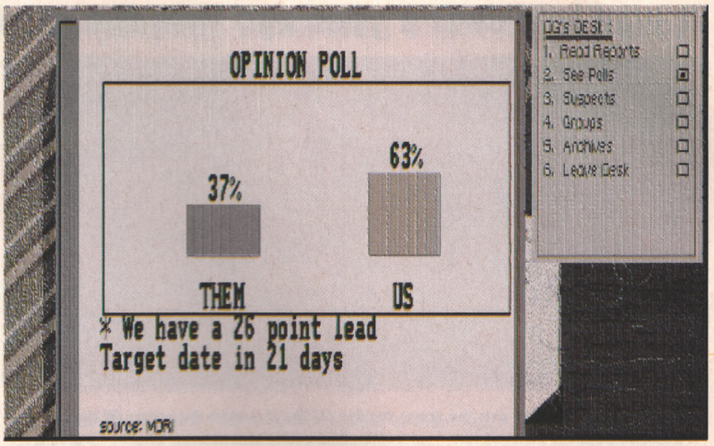




Let's use the department's disinformation section toaim a smear campaign at them.



And – yes! – here's the result of our action in the press. (Isn't power great?)



Happiness is... a majority lead in the opinion poll! (But of course.)

them, so that's a good thing too. The game opens on the first of January, and then plays through every day – much of it involves reading political reports given to you and dealing with them accordingly.

Leaving your office and going into your government department, you get to use official resources to put under surveillance, pursue, abduct, interrogate, search, assault, infiltrate, discredit through smear tactics or (phew) assassinate your enemies. Daily reports inform you of the success or failure of these actions, and by going to the poll you can see what effects they've had on government popularity.
b) Secondly, you must do your best to execute any actions required of you by your secret society. The guy who contacts you is called 'The Secret Master', a masked Tutankhamun-like character who gives you tasks and occasionally talks in riddles. Perhaps I'm just being thick, but still haven't worked out what the first request I got is all about, although his commands have tended to become more comprehensible as the game goes on.

And there you have it. *Floor 13* doesn't really have an ending as such, but if you avoid getting sacked, get the PM to expand the size of your department, and manage to carry out all the more shadowy tasks given you, well, you'll be doing okay. Get yourself admitted to the cabinet, says creator Eastman, and you're doing very well indeed.

I'M GONNA TAKE YOU HIGHER

Yes, yes, yes, you're probably saying at this point, but what do you make of it? Well, first you have to realise that there's very little to compare it to – indeed, programmer David Eastman's earlier release *Conflict* (a political adventure set in the Middle East) is closest in terms of structure.

"There's no dirty trick in the book you can't try"

Despite the fantasy elements, many of the sub-plots that crop up in the game are based on real political events or situations. Mucho research was involved, apparently, including attempts (sadly failed) to get real political characters (Edwina Currie was one) to contribute to the storyline (she declinined unless money was given to a charity of her choice).

Indeed, where the game scores most heavily is in its feeling of realism. The lack of colour, though initially off-putting, helps create atmosphere nicely, while the realistic visual details and interesting plot twists – you really don't ever know what's going to happen next – help build things nicely. You really do get the feeling of sitting alone in a cold dark government office, hidden away in one of the capital's many high rise blocks, planning people's fates. It's stark, chill and tense and it works.

Technically it's very easy to get into and play too – being devious can certainly be a lot of fun. (Forget your morals if you're going to do well at this game!)

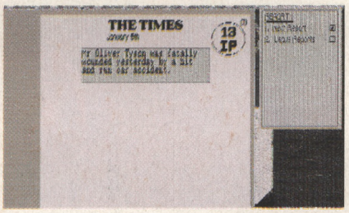
I'm sure that there are quite a few people who're going to love *Floor 13*, then – it certainly has its strengths – but equally, be careful. It's going to leave a lot of you cold. No animation to speak of, no colour, little humour to lighten the mood a bit – we've certainly seen more immediately appealing games. And at over thirty quid, it sure isn't cheap.

Still, if the theme attracts you, you could do a lot worse than give *Floor 13* a whirl. It's got a strong plot, reasonably friendly controls and bags of atmosphere – it certainly managed to intrigue, and then hook, me. It's a true original too. And if you haven't been put off by the fact that this page doesn't feature a single colour picture, well, you might just find it'll get a hold on you too.

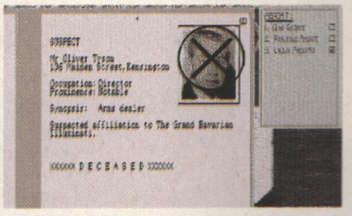
● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

simulation before!

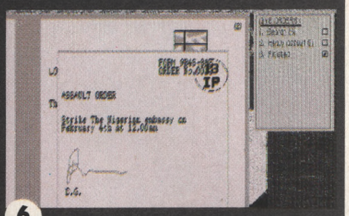
13



Power is... taking out an enemy and seeing the results of it in the press!



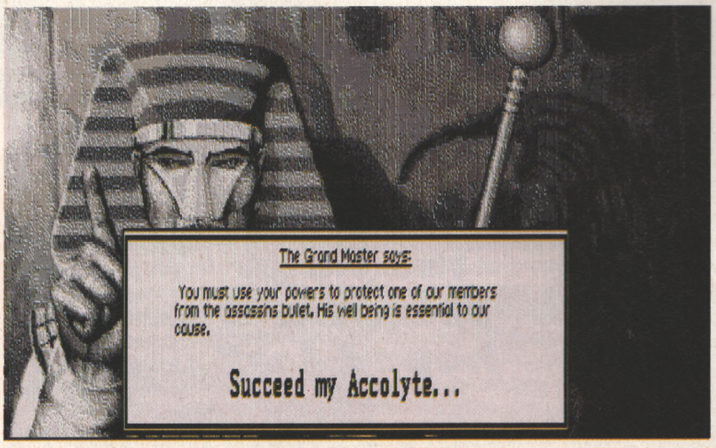
The suspect file records your actions too. Just look what you did to this guy...



6 Heavy Assault: If you need to destroy any evidence, or *really* make sure someone's dead, send in the assault squad.

7 Infiltration: A particularly good way to find out what's going on in any of the political or subversive groups you think might start causing the government trouble. Once you know what's going on, you'll know how to act effectively against it!

8 Interrogation: Especially useful tactic against those slimey do-gooder journalists. *(Ulp!-Ed)*



The Grand Master – a mysterious figure who crops up to give you your secret missions.

UPPERS Despite the (resolutely unmoving) graphics – this is, at heart, very much a text adventure – *Floor 13* has an awful lot going for it 'if you're into that sort of thing.' Plenty of plot twists, bags of atmosphere, and enough skulduggery to leave a nasty taste in the mouth, this political conspiracy thriller is a true original.

DOWNERS Drab, monochrome, graphics and initially unencouraging gameplay could well put a lot of people off. Play – basically a lot of looking at folders and acting on the information you learn – can get pretty dull too. It's definitely a specialist taste, let us say.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you don't mind text-based adventures, this one – packed as it is with assasinations, bent politics, power-hungry characters, dirty tricks and double agents – could well be for you. If, on the other hand, you're really into cutesy platformers with bright bold colours or lots of on-screen animated action, don't apply. (Obvious, really, isn't it?)

75 PERCENT

It was just over a year ago that the world went crazy over the first *EOTB*. Can SSI

Another moody evening sets the scene for *Eye Of The Beholder II:Legend Of Darkmoon*. A piece of paper is pressed into your hands, instructing you to meet Khelben urgently.

Khelben's servant opens the door, motioning for your team of adventurers to enter. Slowly, you ascend the staircase to Khelben's study.

EYE OF T BEHOLD I

Publisher: Strategic Simulations Incorporated/ US Gold
Price: £35.99
Authors: Westwood Associates
Release: Out now

The original *Eye of the Beholder* proved quite a hit when it was first gulped down the gullet of the role-playing fraternity a year or so ago. For many it is the established benchmark in RPGs – and the one to finally knock FTL's of-late-crusty-looking *Dungeon Master* off its throne.

Why is this? Well, *EOTB*'s hard-core appeal is unsurprising, as it not only carries TSR's Advanced Dungeons & Dragons endorsement, but implements many of the second edition game rules. For the casual dungeoneer, less interested in the finer points of the AD&D game system, it's appealing too – featuring swish graphics, a funky plot and, above all, gripping gameplay. So gripping, in fact, that AMIGA POWER bestowed on it a very respectable 88 percent in our first ever issue.

So, 'yum yum, can we have some more please?' being the verdict, what can its successor offer? It is billed as bigger, better and meaner than ever – no small claim considering its dad. Though senior associate producer Nick Beliaeff admits, "It's a tenuous sequel to the first one, as are most sequels," all signs are that's a bigger, better game than its predecessor.

Right: A Cleric warns the party away. Main pic: Ignoring his warning, it's time to beat the hell out of him.

Hey – with 13 man-years of development ploughed into it you'd expect something pretty damn expansive...

Plot-wise *EOTB II:The Legend of Darkmoon* takes up where its forbear left off. You can even port your old party members from the first game into the second – along with all their hard-won accoutrements – provided you're still on speaking terms with them. Of course, we've not all played the original *EOTB*, but not to worry – you can easily create a brand spanking new (and suitably tough) party from the very comprehensive character generation section.

"It's not the huge leap we'd hoped for"

The story, then. Veterans will recall their perilous slog through the monster-ridden sewers beneath the city of Waterdeep but, for all that parties' brave efforts, evil still haunts the world of Forgotten Realms. People are disappearing from nearby villages and Waterdeep's Archmage Khelben wants your four heroes to get it all sorted. (Why he can't manage it himself, what with being an Archmage and all, is never made clear.) One plush animated intro later, your merry band is teleported to the start of their quest – deep inside the dark woods near the Temple Darkmoon.

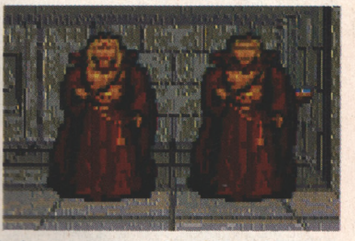
First observations first. Well, we find ourselves with a familiar mouse- and keyboard-driven interface which, while initially tricky to get used to (he smote the wolf with a mighty click on his inventory – oops) soon becomes second nature. As

keep the fire burning, or does the fantasy role-playing backlash start right here?

Khelben looks worn and weary. He informs you of the evil afoot in Castle Darkmoon. Yes, this looks like a job for just such a band of heroes as yours.

With a final pleading look, Khelben implores you to help. Yep, it looks like another profitable and fun-packed adventure is about to begin. (Okay, so it's no big surprise.)

THE ER II



Upon entering Darkmoon Castle, your band of adventurers are confronted by a friendly looking pair of Clerics. Something doesn't feel right, however, and your suspicions are soon confirmed when a battle ensues. (Never ignore your hunches, that's what we say.)

the party hops one click at a time through the wood, which must be a hoot to watch for the outside observer, vicious wolves prowl its regular avenues – obviously a land in which landscape gardeners abound. Old parties will have little trouble wiping out the wolves, and even newly generated ones, which start off at around level six, are similarly tough. There are oddments to be found – rocks for throwing, an old drow (very naughty elves) hideout – but turning a wolf to mush with a couple of swift swipes is not what I'd call the most action-packed way to kick off a game. Considering how hard your characters are, I'd question this section being in the game in the first place.

ELEMENTARY MY DEAR READER

Things hot up fairly swiftly once inside Darkmoon, however. We're presented with the temple itself – plus catacombs beneath and three towers above – to explore, making this one huge mutha of a game. There are four levels through which to progress, each relating to the elements of fire, earth, air and water, and each colour-coded – pointlessly subtle, but I love it. The monsters start off tough and get rapidly tougher, so you'll have to make sure the party rests up between progressively more violent encounters. This isn't easy stuff – so hard, in fact, that I think a hint might be in order, so here it is: there's a room in the catacombs you can use as a bolt-hole when the party's feeling particularly pummelled, and there's a resurrection chamber not very far away too – if you can figure out how to work it.

What else? Well, pleasingly, non-player characters make regular chatty cameo appearances – more so than they did in *EOTB* – by which the plot is carried along. These often amount to little more than a pretty picture and some words, but there are some interesting encounters in which you're not quite sure whether you should clobber who you've come across or help them out – some monsters will wibble on amiably just prior to stabbing you in the back!

Occasionally you'll chance upon someone – or something! – that will join your party and fight alongside you. An early encounter will see a halfling thief called Insal tagging along but, with his chaotic neutral alignment, you're never quite sure if you should trust him. This, along with the characters' new-found environmental 'awareness' – walk past a hidden door and someone in the party will mutter that they feel a draught – really helps to draw you into the game world. It's not long before you start thinking of the party as individuals rather than a multi-legged killing machine (an accusation levelled at most multi-character RPGs).

"It's billed as bigger, better and meaner"

When you get into a scrap though, and there are plenty of them, it all goes bonkers. Deft mouse manipulation →

SPELLBINDING STUFF

One gripe I've always had with AD&D is that, under the normal rules, you can't go making up your own spells – it was this obvious failing in the SSI stuff that helped make Mindscape's *Legend* (also reviewed this issue) look so good, for instance. *EOTB2* looks very sorry in comparison – you're limited to a selection of mage and cleric spells (depending on which type of character you're dealing with at the time) which becomes wider as the characters go up in level.

The spell system – powerful, but its adherence to the simplistic and rather long-in-the-tooth AD&D rules make it just too rigid.

So what happens? Well, a mage character will memorize spells from a set list while the party rests – it's a bit of a bummer, for as soon as he or she casts a spell, it's instantly forgotten. (And I thought these ultra-powerful mage types were supposed to be a bit clever!) Clerics, meanwhile, pray for spells (high-level paladins can do exactly the same trick).

It doesn't end there though. Mages have a rather more offensive arcane arsenal, with fireballs, disintegration and ice storms all available at higher levels, while clerics fall more into a nursing and personnel role and are able to cure wounds and pray for better combat ability during a scrap – though they can still give you a nasty flame strike if riled.

All this firepower places some restrictions on a magic user's resilience. Mages can wear no armour and clerics can only use blunt weapons, so it's best to keep them out of the front rank as much as possible.

THE GENERATION GAME

One of your first tasks when playing *Eye of the Beholder II* is to sort out a party of adventurers for yourself. Character generation is by the good old AD&D method – take a racial type, give it a bunch of attributes and fiddle them. The usual motley assortment of Tolkien-esque races are offered: human, elf, dwarf, halfling, gnome (OK, so Middle Earth had no gnomes) and various mongrels, along with a number of different alignments – the philosophy, if you will, by which the character deals with the world. Lawful good is a complete goody-goody while, at the opposite end of the philosophical spectrum, chaotic evil represents the attitude of a computer magazine publisher with a hangover.

Then there's a variety of jobs, or character classes, to be had: fighter, mage, thief, cleric, paladin or ranger. Alignment has some bearing on this lot, as does race – you can't have an evil gnome doing the job of a paladin, for example – but the greater consideration is a character's ability scores. Fighters obviously need great strength, while mages need intelligence and clerics need huge dollops of wisdom.

To create a character, you get the computer to randomly roll for attributes and, going on whatever attribute has the highest score, that will determine what kind of job the character will do. However, it's possible to bodge the figures. Just select the appropriate attribute, hit '+' a few times and you've got a bunch of superhumans/ elves/ dwarves/ halflings/ gnomes with more muscle, brainpower and personality than a team of Olympic weightlifters solely comprising Carol Vordemann. This, as you may well have guessed, is exactly what I do every time I play the game...

Character creation – *EOTB* style. After selecting sex, race, character profession it's time to roll the statistics and choose a cute little picture. All the same as in the first game, actually.

is needed to keep the front-rank fighters attacking, while the magic users lob spells from the back; it can get really frenetic as you see the party's hit points dwindle away while more evil creatures come piling in. Animation during the fighting is pretty much the same as the original – jerky, three-frame sequences – but you'll spend more time whizzing your cursor around the weapons icons and spells lists than watching rheumatic monsters grind through their moves.

The graphics, though differing slightly from *EOTB*, are of a similar high standard and the sound effects remain exactly the same, right down to the eerie, echoing footsteps that do so much to put the willies up you. There are puzzles aplenty to contend with and ominous hints from the party about the likely outcome of pulling a lever or inserting a key in a booby-trapped lock. It all conspires to create a terrific atmosphere, so edgy that it's almost a relief to come across a monster for a good old cathartic thrash.

A good solid game then, great even, but there remains a problem. *The Legend of Darkmoon*, while being just that little bit better and more involving than *EOTB* in almost every area, is not the huge leap for dungeonkind I'd hoped it would be. A new plot, a bigger game world, a wider variety of nasties and more mind-stretching puzzles; it's all there, but it's still more of the same.

That's not to knock it – fans of the original will love the game and it still sits head and shoulders above many other RPGs. I suppose I've been spoilt by the 360-degree animation and glorious auto-mapping of Origin's *Ultima Underworld* (sorry folks, it's PC only) – this is still one of the two or three best RPGs available for the Amiga. Keep your fingers crossed for *EOTB 3* then – which promises new and radical features for Amiga players – but in the meantime, enjoy this one. It's well worth a look and should take you absolutely ages to conquer.

● *KARL FOSTER*

Neat cameo pics liven things up from time to time. They do actually help to give the non-player characters a bit of fleshing out.

The adventure begins in the forest outside Darkmoon. The first fight isn't far off...

Limited interaction is another addition to the *Eye Of The Beholder* game system.

Two rough and ready (and not very intelligent) guards discuss just how the player's party should be executed...

After a few seconds fighting, there's only one guard left standing, and he's not so boastful anymore. That'll teach him to mess with a bunch of do-gooders.

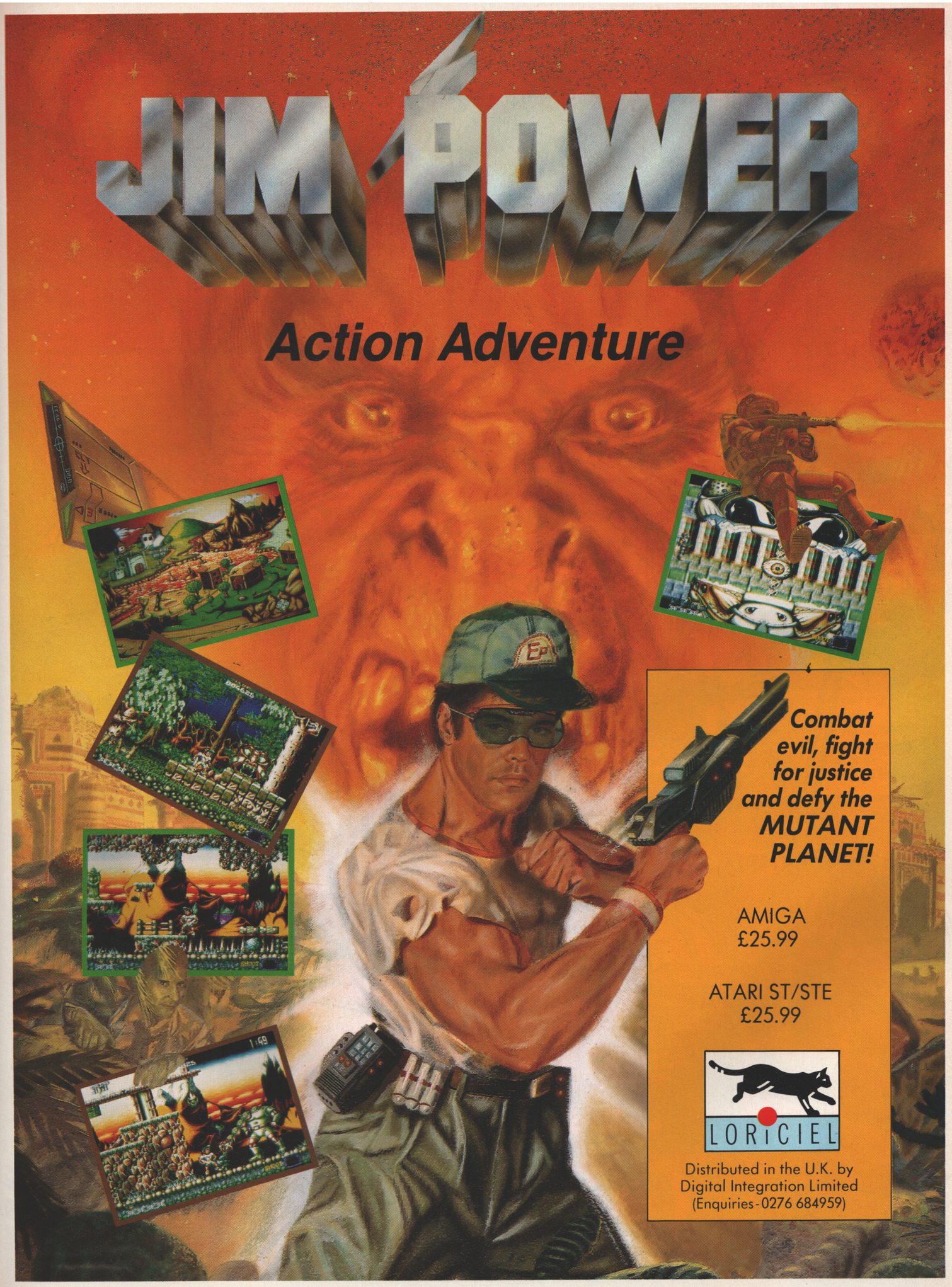
UPPERS *Eye Of The Beholder* fans will be in hog heaven. More of the action-cum-brain-burning same, plus a little bit extra, from an RPG game engine that has already proved itself just about the best there is. A good, solid, well thought out game, with lots of neat touches.

DOWNERS Good though it is, this isn't quite the major advance on the original we'd all hoped for, particularly in terms of animation. And please can we have auto-mapping next time?

THE BOTTOM LINE

A must for the dedicated RPG enthusiast (déjà vu anyone? Yes, we have said that a few too many times lately...) and, in tandem with the original, makes for an utterly huge world in which you could fritter away weeks of your life. Not such a huge leap in RPG standards as the first game was – which makes it a bit disappointing – but still an excellent game.

86 PERCENT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COMPLETE control

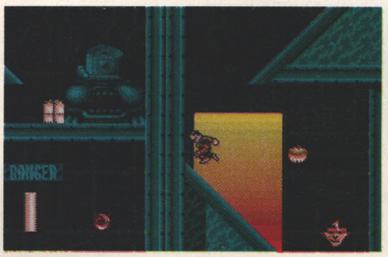
We've got so many tips there's no room for an intro. So, um, here it isn't...

POPULOUS II
(Electronic Arts)

Try typing MUSIC on the special codes section for some weird tunes, says Anthony Blears of Penrhyn Bay.

HARLEQUIN
(Gremlin)

We been picking up strange reports about this one... Somebody called David (the surname wasn't too clear) from Chiswick, for example, has discovered that the Jigsaw Level is the place to be if you want to explore higher levels or see the end sequence.



An odd game deserves an odd tip. Here it is...

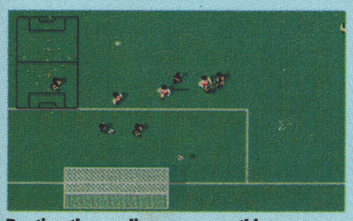
When inside the Clock Tower, go to the gift box near the big tunnel at the bottom of the level and collect the space hopper. Keep this; you'll need it later. Then go on until you get to the very beginning of the Jigsaw Level (just after the kite). Now get out the kite and hop up onto the ledge to the right that you usually wouldn't be able to reach. Then jump to the left. You should see strange graphics, as if the Amiga has crashed. Jump up again and then out to the left. Now you should be falling, and if you're lucky you'll land. Now you're free to explore, and sooner or later you'll find you've come to another level, or perhaps the end of the game.

PIT-FIGHTER
(Domark)

Michael Filby from Bedford suggests you type in LOBSTERS while playing, and then press any of the numeric keys to skip levels. Pressing C will take you to the championship level, and L will jump to the elimination round. Probably your best bet, however, is to reach for the 'Off' switch.

Wot, no lobsters? Shome mishtake surely?

KICK OFF 2
(Anco)


Beating the goalie was never *this* easy...

Here's a game you can never have too many tips for. Robert Papworth (aged 10) of Jersey has the following advice: play a home match and injure someone. When the sub comes on, injure him too and then sub their goalie. An injured player should come on though, in the second half, he doesn't come on at all, leaving you with an open goal. We reckon more people ought to tell us their ages, by the way.

SCOOBY & SCRAPPY DOO
(Hi-Tec)

It sounds like complete nonsense, this cheat, but (shock!) it works. Apparently...

"I have got a cheat," says Andrew Howard (aged 9), who's from Bracknell. "When it shows Scrappy Doo and Scooby. Not frightened type in QWERTYUIOPASDFGHJKLZXCVBNM and no capitals. by." His father helpfully adds, "It gives 'Continues' up to Iceland," but we're still none the wiser.

POKING FUN

Got an Action Replay cartridge? Then you're in luck. Just load the game, press the red button, press 'M' and type in the number given in the list below. Change the first number in the list that appears, and then press 'X' to return to the game. That's unless we put a 'TFD' before it – if so, use the TFD function instead.

Alienator 8FD Lives
Artura 65F3 Score
Bull Frogger 3189D Lives
Cabal 39DE5 Grenades 39DDA Lives
Commando AB08 Grenades (player 1)
Fantastic Voyage 1109 Lives
Final Day 1B2DF Time
Gauntlet III 1D0DE Energy
Golden Axe 5968 Smart bombs
Guardian Angel TFD C0DBAF Lives
HATE TFD 9F66 Lives
Ivanhoe TFD 932 Lives
Lupo Alberto 27562 Lives (blue)
Magic Land Dizzy 171 Lives
Mega-Twins B42E Timer
Mission X TFD 1BC0A Lives
Moonstone C0D82D Strength (blue) C0D822 Strength (green)
Narco Police C16DD3 Lives
Nebulus 7FB81 Player 1 lives 7FB83 Player 2 lives
PP Hammer 105BF Lives 105C3 Treasure 105C1 Time
Pro Power Boat 3116 Lives 3122 Bombs
Rambo III 13613 Energy 67B6 Arrows 67CC Bombs 67F8 Bullets
Robotnic 5F833 Lives 624AC Bullets
Rollerpede TFD 17228 Lives
Sidearms 25E4F Lives
Sidewinder 12955 Lives
Smash TV 1A7D Lives
Spidertronic 24B1B Lives 24B14 Timer
Squamble 1861D Lives
Super Scramble Sim 16C23 Timer
Thunderburner E92B Lives
Thunderjaws 1D50 Lives
Tornado Ground Attack C0CCBA Weapons
Viz 1F1E4 Timer
Voodoo Nightmare 1BC9 Lives
Zoom 2B4A3 Lives

Thanks (in a very big way) to James Gurney, Ian White, Paul Bagnarol, Mark Sealey, R Brown.

TITUS THE FOX
(Titus)

D G Rowan of Harlow has just had his final brush (geddit?) with danger, having polished off the last level of Titus's foxy little number.

Here are the codes:

1) ON THE FOXY TRAIL – 2625
2) LOOKING FOR CLUES – 8455
3) ROAD WORKS AHEAD – 2974
4) GOING UNDERGROUND – 4916
5) FLAMING CATACOMBS – 1933
6) COMING TO TOWN – 0738
7) FOXY'S DEN – 2237
8) ON THE ROAD TO MARRAKESH – 5648
9) HOME OF THE PHARAOHS – no code
10) DESERT EXPERIENCE – 8612
11) WALLS OF SAND – 4187
12) A BEACON OF HOPE – 1350
13) A PIPE DREAM – no code
14) GOING HOME – 5052
15) JUST MARRIED – no code

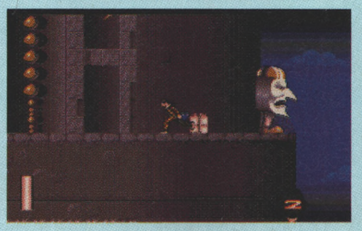
Complete *Titus*? No problem...

FREE! We want your tips, cheats, maps and pokes. And we want you to give them to us... free! No, actually, that's *not* true. We're *really* awarding software prizes for the meatiest tips we receive each month, and for those smaller titbits we'll be giving out big, slobbery kisses. (Please state your preference out of Gary, Amanda or Stuart.) The address is Complete Control, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

HARLEQUIN

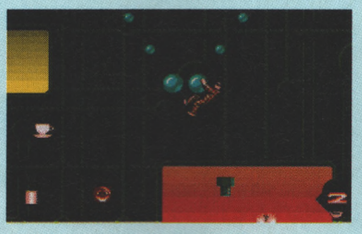
We love this game – as regular readers may have spotted – so it was only a matter of time before we ran a giant tips extravaganza on it. Here's Matthew Squires (with aid from the Gremlin boys) to help...

1. THE CLOCK TOWER – STAGE 1



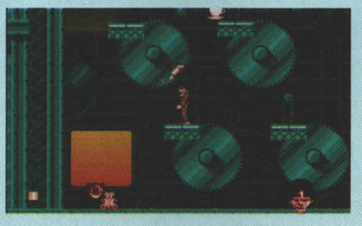
Beginning at 'The Clock Tower', climb to the first switch which starts the moving platform. When standing on this platform you should be able to see beneath you another switch which must be thrown – this creates a platform further up the tower. Now get back on the moving platform and climb up the tower until you reach the next switch. This opens the door to 'The Clockworks' at the base of the tower – use your brolly power to float to the bottom to enter The Clockworks.

2. THE CLOCKWORKS – STAGE 1



Flick the first switch you see in The Clockworks – this removes the wall around the 'important' switch at the bottom of the slopes. Now slide down the slopes and use the bottom one to hit the 'important' switch – this starts the clockhands in The Clock Tower. Now climb to the swinging pendulums and swing across to the left hand side of The Clockworks. Slide down the big slope, avoiding the drips, and leave at the door marked 'exit'. This takes you to 'The Dream Mile'.

3. THE DREAM MILE



Be careful at this point not to drop into the water far below you. Leave the moving platform to cross onto the totem pole-style ledges and avoid the sandsnakes, buddahs and scorpions. Once you have climbed the pyramid rope structure you should come across 'The Lost Temple Of Hur-Ho-Hi', but unfortunately it's closed, so you must climb up the left sloping side of the temple and jump onto the floating platform just above and to the left. After negotiating the tricky jumps and the strong wind you should be able to flick the switch which opens the temple. So go to the temple and enter the mouth.

Inside the temple there is a large plug with a switch beside it. Flick the switch as this operates the 'Virtual TV' in 'TV Wonderland'. Now leave The Dream Mile the way you came in and return to The Clockworks.

4.THE CLOCKWORKS – STAGE 2

Back in The Clockworks, you must use the moving platforms to reach the big slope before jumping across to the left in the direction of the cogs. Jump onto the cogs and up onto the conveyer belt which will carry you to the right. Be careful – use the conveyer belt to pick up enough speed to leap the gaps. As you speed along you should see a switch below you. Drop down – using brolly power if you have it – and flick the switch, landing on the platform below. Now jump on the platforms to the left collecting the goodies as you go.

At the bottom of The Clockworks there is a very narrow passage which was blocked before. Harlequin should now be able to crawl through to a chamber where there is a switch and some hidden bonuses. Flick the switch and go back the way you came in. Now you should be able to use the cogs to reach the conveyer belts at the top of the level and jump your way to the exit.

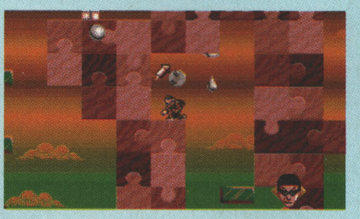
5. THE CLOCK TOWER – STAGE 2

Back at The Clock Tower you must climb all the way to the top, where you will find a large clock face. Tip: there are lots of hidden tokens here. Now jump onto the clockhands and use them to jump your way onto the kite which will fly into the wild blue yonder.

6. FLIGHT OF FANCY

On the kite you should easily be able to collect the tokens and dodge the obstacles before reaching your destination – 'The Jig-Saw Puzzle'.

7. THE JIG-SAW PUZZLE



The key to The Jig-Saw Puzzle is to flick the four switches which are located at roughly the four corners of the level. Once these have been switched on, you should be able to find an upward passage which did not exist before. Use the steps to climb up and you will find a bank of TVs – all turned off at the moment and yes, you guessed it, you can switch them on by running right and finding the hidden switch. When you return to the TVs they should be displaying 'TV SALE NOW ON'. This means that you can now enter TV Wonderland. Go to the exit in Jig-Saw Puzzle and leave. You should now be enjoying 'A Walk Across the Rooftops'.

8. A WALK ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS – STAGE 1

Somewhere near the bottom right of the rooftops there is the first piece of the broken heart. You'll have to throw a switch or two to reach it, though, not forgetting the one just below where you start – it fixes the table you'll need to climb up to get to the window.

Here you will eventually find a large window which was previously covered by an advertisement for TV Wonderland. Go through and you will be in Wonderland.

9. WONDERLAND

TV Wonderland is pretty huge so you'll have to use the remote controls (they act just like doors) to transport yourself around the level. Your aim is to reach the Virtual TV, which is advertised in posters around the level. (On some posters there are even arrows which give the direction of the VTV.) From where you start you must slide and fall your way down to the bottom right of the level before using the platforms and ledges above you to reach the first switch. This switch removes a wall which blocks a

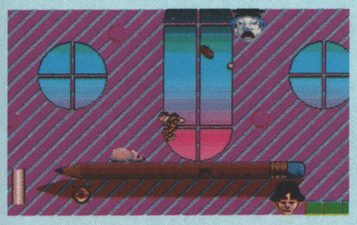
downward passage near the bottom left corner of the level, so go left 'til you see a moving platform which will take you down.

Here you will be able to see the second switch. This one also removes a blockage along to the right of your current position, so leave this chamber the way you entered and scamper up and around, where you will find a small passage just big enough for you to crawl through. At the end of the passage is the switch you need to create the first remote control. This will be created at the top of the level, so make your way up and you will eventually find the remote control which you can enter.

You will now be in another section of TV Wonderland and you should be able to see your first VTV poster pointing left. As you climb your way to the level you will find another remote which you must enter. This will transport you to a small chamber where there is only one route to take. You will find a switch which starts a moving platform later on in the level. Leave the chamber the way you came in and continue your climb to the top of the larger room (follow the arrows on the posters). Once you reach the top you will find another remote control. Go in.

This is the final TV Wonderland chamber, and it houses the Virtual TV itself. It shouldn't be too hard to find – it's near the bottom right. The programme showing should be 'Play Time', a kiddies favourite – if you jump into the TV screen you will enter a new area called 'The Learning Curve'.

10. THE LEARNING CURVE



The Learning Curve has only one switch in it, located near the right hand wall. It switches the VTV to something called 'The Cutesy Bros' – a console-style platform game which may be entered in the same way as The Learning Curve.

11. CUTESY BROS

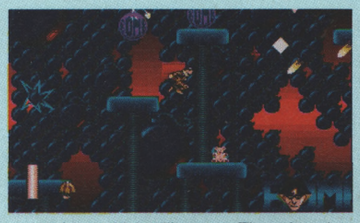
Only two switches in this one – these remove a pipe enabling you to collect a piece of a heart. Now you should go back out and right back to The Dream Mile. There is a switch near a plug here which you must flick. Now go right back to The Learning Curve again.

12. THE LEARNING CURVE STAGE 2

Go to 'The Bomb Run', which is in the top left hand corner of The Learning Curve.

13. THE BOMB RUN

Make sure you have a full bar of energy before you enter here as you are bound to lose a fair amount in the mass of



explosions which will ensue. There is only one route through the level – left to right – so hurry as fast as you can, being careful not to miss any credit tokens.

Half way through the level you should see a switch beside a tool box and a book on how to fix clocks. This creates a huge machine called 'The Throat' in the Clockworks, so when you reach the end of the Bomb Run and you have a choice between either jumping into the clock space or taking the cog, as this will transport you back to The Clockworks.

14. THE CLOCKWORKS – STAGE 3

You will find yourself falling through the air as you enter from The Bomb Run, so push left on your joystick and try to land near the swinging pendulums. Note: there may be be more credit tokens lying around here, so have a good look. Now make your way to the bottom left of the level, near the three horizontally moving platforms, to see 'The Throat'. Enter.

15. THE THROAT

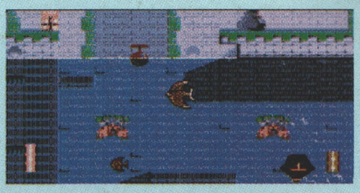
There is really only one way to go through The Throat, and that is down. Any switches you come across should be flicked, as they all remove blockages to the downward passage. Beware the large bubble creatures – they speed up when their bubble bursts. The firework shields are handy to have on this level and holy power is a must. Eventually you will reach the bottom. There's a large pool of water here, and, lying nearby, a Jack-in-the-box with a fish power token inside. Get this and transform into a fish for 'Sewercide'.

16. SEWERCIDE – STAGE 1

Sewercide has one main route through to the end, with a few barriers to hinder your progress. Collect the fish power from the Jack-in-the-box near the start (you cannot carry fishpower from one level to another) and swim your way through the sewers. As you go you will notice some smaller passages leading off from the main route, so explore these, as they will usually have some bonus tokens or switches situated somewhere along them. If you are in fish mode, be sure to take a deep breath as some of the underwater currents are pretty strong down there.

There are two exits from Sewercide. The first you should find will be a large pipe, similar to the one you came through from the Throat. Enter this and you will emerge in 'Fathom This Out!'

17. FATHOM THIS OUT!



'Fathom' can be described as a large swimming bath complex, complete with diving boards, lockers and fat bathers. Use fish power to explore the first pool you come across and hit the switch located near the top left corner – this removes the bars of soap which were blocking a passage to your right. Find this passage – it's in the same pool – and flick the switch you find there. This switch creates a diving board which you will use a little later on.

Leave this pool and continue right, on dry land, until you reach the diving boards. Here you will find a tall structure – the diving board you created will be at the very top. Climb up and use the board to do a huge bounce across onto a platform. Fall down onto the island and make another big jump to the right and you should land safely on terra firma once again.

Now you will see a sign informing you that the lockers are along to the right. One of these lockers is Davy Jones' – it's locked by a sturdy padlock. To open this, continue along to the right and you should see a switch beside a key. Clicking the switch will result in the locker opening to reveal an unsigned contract.

The contract is from Davy Jones Construction Company, and it is for building a chimney at the rooftops – but as the contract is not signed, the chimney remains unbuilt. To sign the contract you must get to the top of the lockers using the diving boards. Here you will find a pen and some ink beside a switch. This will sign the contract, and a chimney will now be present at the rooftops.

After exploring the rest of the pools and collecting all the credit tokens, leave the same way you came in.

18. SEWERCIDE – STAGE 2

Beside the pipe you just travelled through there should be a switch. If you have not already flicked it then do so. This switch removes the cover from the overflow pipe elsewhere in the sewers. If you continue along the main route you will find the overflow. Enter, as this will take you to 'What A Fall'.

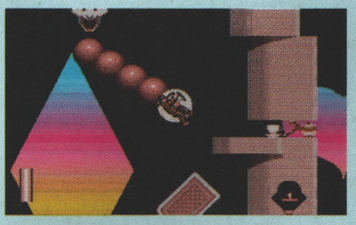
19. WHAT A FALL!

A tricky level, this one! You must use brolly power very carefully, as it's easy to get killed in the poison glasses which are positioned at various places around the level. From the start, go left and collect the brolly power from one of the Jack-in-the-boxes before dropping off the left hand side of the ledge. Glide your way down, collecting the credit bonuses as you go, until you find a poster advertising 'The Gambler' – a VTV programme.

From the ledge underneath the poster, jump left until you find a switch. This creates a platform which you will use a little later on. Now jump back along to the right past the poster until you can go no further. Jump up and you should be able to see another switch. This is the one which changes the channel on the TV to 'The Gambler', so go back to the poster and check that it now says 'Coming Soon'. Now walk off the left hand side of the platform positioned under the poster and drop straight down. Avoid the poison glasses, and you will reach the bottom where there is a door to 'The Rooftops'.

20. WALK ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS – STAGE 2

Once at The Rooftops, you can check the



chimney has been built, but don't climb in just yet. You have to re-enter the TV Wonderland and return to the VTV which should now be showing 'The Gambler'. Jump in.

21. THE HOUSE OF CARDS

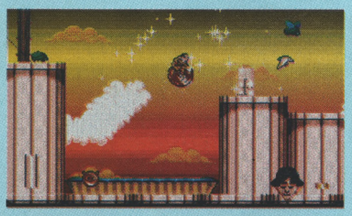
As you enter the House of Cards you will notice a stationary rope hanging down from the jester's head. Your first task is to get this moving again. So drop down from the ledge you are on and run right, avoiding the card guards and the crazy spades. Eventually you will find a switch which will start the swinging pendulum.

Return to the rope and swing your way across. Use the next rope to swing onto the stack of playing cards. Tip: there are loads of tokens down and to the right, so drop down and get the goodies. From where you start you must jump up the

platforms and the sloping cards until you find a switch. This creates a small ledge which will allow you to crawl through a previously un-enterable passage.

The passage should be easily found, and at the other end there is another rope. Don't use it yet. Instead, drop down and you will find a switch. Now climb back up and use the rope to swing across onto the stack of playing cards. Run right and you will find a circus tent which, if the proper switch has been thrown, will be open. Entering the tent will take you to 'The Whacky Jugglers'.

22. THE WHACKY JUGGLERS



From the door at the start of the level, run right, crossing the trampoline until you find a cannon. Jumping on top of the cannon will send you hurtling skyward on a cannonball until you land with a thump on a platform.

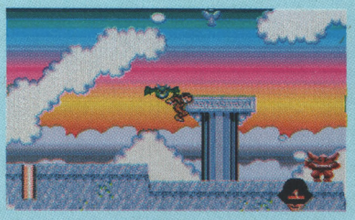
Make sure the switch above the platform is switched on and walk off to the left. Go back across the trampoline and this time climb up the high wire. You should be able to see above you a ton weight which the switch you just threw raised. Now continue left along the wire and you should see the first whacky juggler. This is a tricky bit which may take a little practice – use the juggler's balls to leap upwards from platform to platform.

Use the third juggler to leap up onto the platform floating above, where you will find a switch. This switch also removes a ton weight a little later on in the level. Now drop off onto the juggler again and use the balls to do a huge leap up and to the right, where you should land on another platform beside some hot air balloons.

Make your way along the baskets and platforms and unicycles until you reach another set of jugglers. Be careful on the unicycles, as one small slip could result in you falling all the way back down again. Use brolly power if you have it. Do the same as before with the jugglers, but this time jump up and go left from the final one. Now keep on left across the platforms and you will find the last switch, which removes the final ton weight blocking your path. So go back right – taking the high road this time – and follow the route until you reach the cannons. Use these as before and you should have no problems reaching the gates to 'Heavens Above'.

23. HEAVENS ABOVE

From the start of Heaven's Above, run right, avoiding the bats and grim reapers, and jump across the platforms on top of the pillars until you can go no further. Jump up and left and you will find a switch which will unlock the first gate blocking



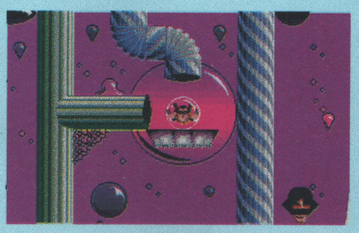
your path. Make your way left and you should eventually find the first large angel.

There are a lot of bonus credits available here, so milk them for all they're worth. Now drop off the angel's wing until you hit the ground, go right and enter the chamber at the end of the corridor. There are three switches in this chamber located near the walls and ceiling, so find them and flick them all. Once you have done this, leave the way you came in and you will find that the floor which was there is there no more. Instead a lift is operating.

Use the lift or drop down onto the level below the one you are on and enter the chamber. Find the switch here and return to the lift. Let the lift carry you up up to the level two above the one you were just on. Go left until you have to crawl to reach the switch. This switch creates 'Hellzapoppin'', which you will find a little later on.

If you have survived this far it might seem like a good time to have a break. So return to the lift and travel all the way down until you find a straw leading down. Jump in and enter the bonus credit token grabber's paradise – 'Suck It And See'.

24. SUCK IT AND SEE



There is nothing to harm you in this level, so take your time to explore it fully and collect all the tokens. All these straws act as junctions between four levels, but at the moment you will not have access to them all. The first exit you should find will be the one to the Cutesy Bros. In this level you should only be able to go a little way left, but if you approach the Cutesy Bros from the VTV end you will be able to explore it more thoroughly. Anyway you approach it you will find the second piece of the heart! Return to Suck It And See.

Apart from the one to Heaven, the only other exit from this level will be to Hellzapoppin', which you created by throwing that last switch in Heaven.

25. HELLZAPOPPIN'

Your aim in Hellzapoppin' is to reach the top left of the chamber. To do so this will involve finding three main switches which take away three walls blocking the way. So first run all the way left until you can go no further. Here you should see a small moving platform moving up, so jump on it and let it carry you up to where there is a

ledge. Throw the switch you find here and wait for another lift to take you a little higher. Eventually you'll find the first of the three wall switches, so flick it and make your way back down again. Once at the bottom corridor again, run right until you see another passage leading upwards.

Use the moving platform to take you into the chamber above and you will see a diagonally moving platform racing around the chamber. After a few goes you should have found the second wall switch near the ceiling of the chamber. Leave here and return to the bottom corridor, run right (ignore the first upward passage you come to) and enter the chamber nearest to where you came in. The last wall switch is in here, and once you have flicked it the way ahead should be clear of all blockages. To get to the top left of the level you must return to the bottom corridor and run left – go up the first passage you come across. After negotiating the tricky little platforms you must go right, up and left until you come to a place where there are loads of spiked wheels falling from above. You'll have to dodge or shoot these as you climb up.

Eventually you'll find a grave with the word 'Music' engraved upon it. From here, run left, picking up the second piece of the heart as you go! Here there is a switch which will transform the grave into a gleaming musical note. The relevance of this will become apparent a little later. Now you must make your way all the way back down again and leave the way you came in – through the straw.

26. THE SHORT WAY BACK

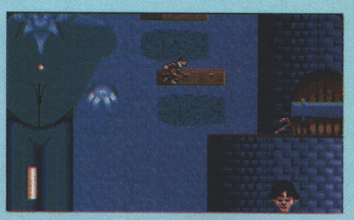
Now, unless you have been all the way through the Cutesy Bros level, you will have to do a little back tracking. Don't worry though, because you should be able to race through the levels without worrying about switches! The way back is – Heavens Above, The Whacky Jugglers, The House of Cards and TV Wonderland. In no time at all you should find yourself back at A Walk Across The Rooftops.

27. A WALK ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS – STAGE 3

Find the chimney and enter. You will now be in 'A Dark and Gloomy Place.'

28. A DARK AND GLOOMY PLACE

From the start of the level, run right and follow the route. You will pass a locked door marked 'Crypt 2' which you will have to come back to a little later on. Continue your way up the level, using the swinging

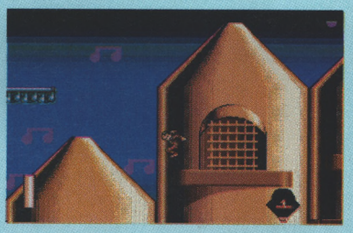


arms as ropes until you find 'Crypt 1'. The switch to open this door is just a little to the right so swing across, flick it and enter Crypt 1.

Here you will find a dark chamber and somewhere in it are three switches which can only be switched in a certain order. There's no penalty for getting it wrong, so get up there and start flicking. Once all three switches have been thrown, leave the chamber and make your way back to Crypt 2 which should now be open. This is similar to the first crypt, but there is only one switch near the ceiling, so climb up and flick it. This switch pulls back a curtain at the top of A Dark and Gloomy Place to reveal a huge organ!

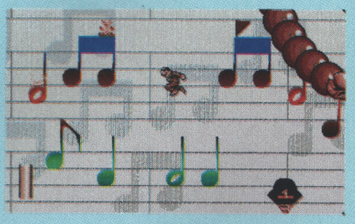
Leave the crypt and continue your way upwards and onwards until you finally reach the organ itself. You will be able to enter the organ and this will transport you to 'The Organ Chamber'.

29. THE ORGAN CHAMBER



If you have followed this solution up 'til now then this should be a simple case of finding the music book and jumping in. Don't forget that switch in Hellzapoppin' with which you created the musical note. If you can't do that then you'll have to find another way out...

30. SHEET MUZAK



Now all you have to do is find the last piece of heart and take all four pieces to the heart chamber, somewhere in this level – but watch out for the huge, red, bullet-spewing snake things!

31. THE HEART CHAMBER

If you now have four pieces of the heart then bully for you – you'll now be able to see the end of game sequence. If not, then it's tough basically – you're just going to have to try it all again!

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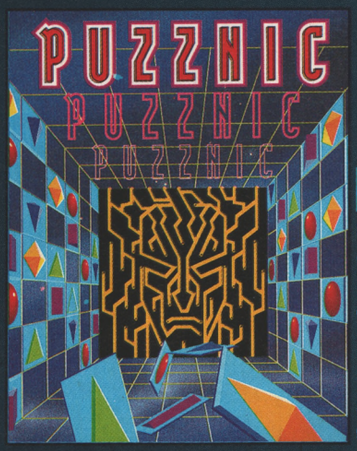

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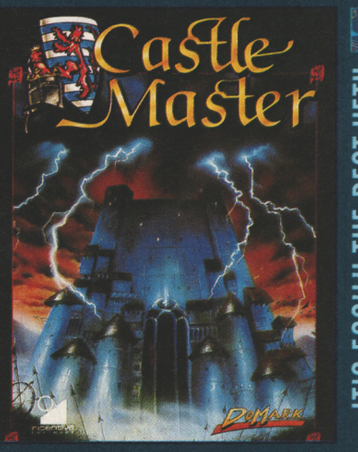

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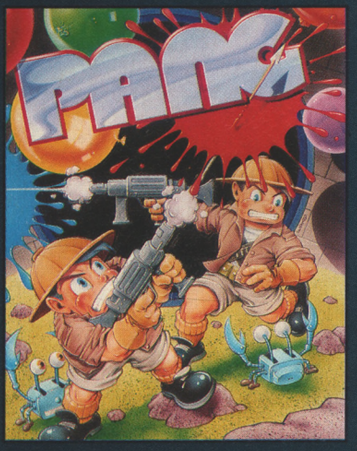

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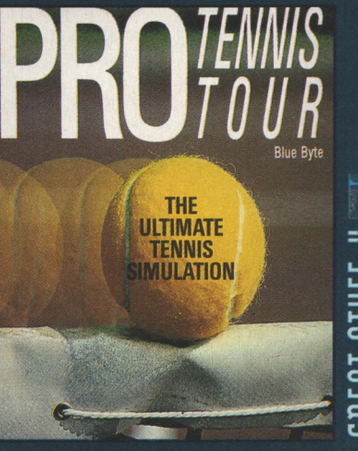

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The Hit Squad

THE HIT SQUAD, P.O. BOX 350,
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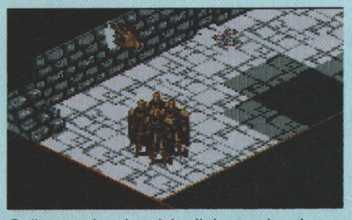
SHADOW

Domark's first real stab at an RPG has proved a real success, coupling easy-to-get-into presentation with a very innovative new light and darkness system (Photoscape) which integrates visual effects with the actual gameplay itself. High time we did some tips for it, you might think, and indeed, that's what we though too. Join Matthew Squires and the Domark boys for the full monty...

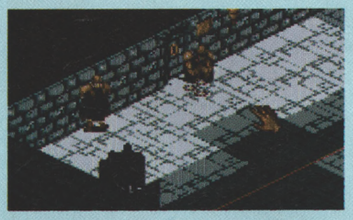
LEVEL 1 THE WILDERNESS

Your first task is to collect all the apples, sticks and a bow. It's important that you don't forget the latter – it can be found at the far right hand corner of the woods – as you're going to need it later in the game. Then follow the path, collect the two torches at the end of it and go down the steps into the next level.

LEVEL 2 DUNGEON

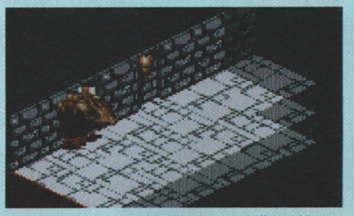


Collect and extinguish all the torches here.

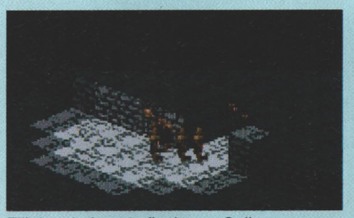


Collect the three silver coins, needed to buy information from the wall screens.

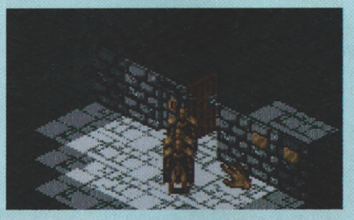
Move over to the door and pull the switch. Proceed through the doors, collecting the stick, bread and full water flask.



On encountering the skeleton, kill it with sticks, then swipe its empty flask.
Drink from the fountain – in fact, always do this when you come across one.



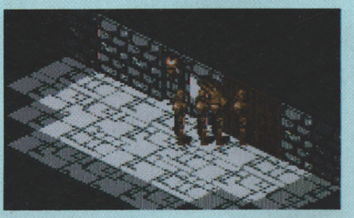
Fill the skeleton's flask too. Collect an additional flask – you'll find it by the gap in the wall – by using the coins you collected earlier on. (Remember?)



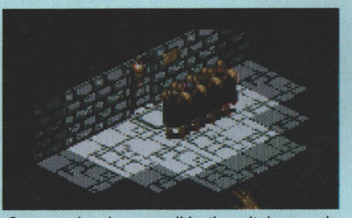
Pick up the apple. You must always collect food, as you never know when you and the boys are going to get a bit peckish. Look for a secret switch on the wall and push it. Collect the strength potion.

Now open the lock with the key, leave your torch by the gargoyle (light sensor) in order to open the double doors and proceed. Leave a weight on the floor switch ahead and enter the room.

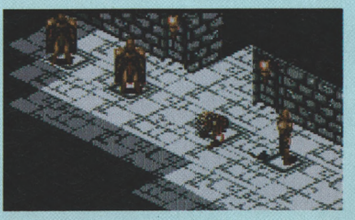
Here you'll encounter a skeleton. Kill it and collect the shield and chest. Exit the room.



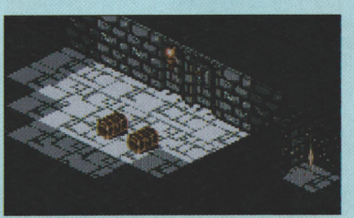
Proceed around the corner, drink from fountain, leave another weight on the floor switch and go through to the double doors, avoiding the skeleton.



Once at the doors, pull both switches and you'll be able to proceed through. Collect the apples which can be found in the corner of the corridor.

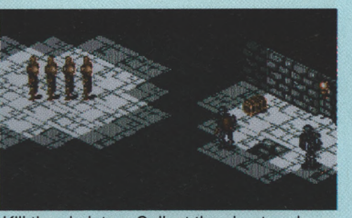


At the next set of double doors, try to avoid the skeleton and place one character on each of the floorpads. Alternatively you could leave a dead body on a pad, as it weighs the same as a living character. (Sound grizzly, but the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one – or something). Go through doors.



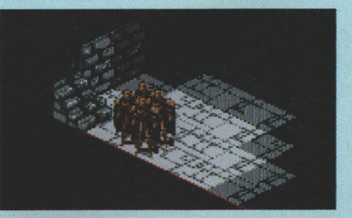
Pull the secret switch by the side of the small door, collect the scroll (light) and leave the room.

Collect the key by the fountain and open the double doors with it.

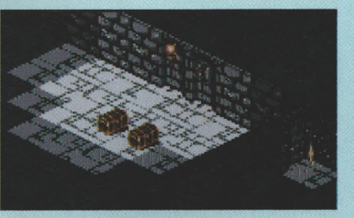


Kill the skeleton. Collect the chest and descend the steps into level three.

LEVEL 3 DUNGEON



Collect the key. Buy the light spell, pull the switch and proceed, once again, through the double doors.



Pull the 'Pull' switch but send only one character through the teleporter. Collect the key lying in the corner. Have a drink. (If you've got this far you deserve it !) Pull the switch in the far corner and exit the room through the teleporter.

Open the portcullis with the new key. Do not pull the 'Do not pull' switch (even more surprises!). Have a drink and collect food. Yes, yet more food – you need to

LANDS

grab every bit of grub you can get your hands on.

Now throw anything over the middle pit onto the weight switch. This will cause the middle pit to disappear. Extinguish all light (to keep you safe from the light trap) and collect the chest from the alcove using spellbook and key. Exit the room in the following way: use the key in the portcullis, stand one pair of characters on the front switch and one pair on the back switch. The two characters at the back will now be teleported into the adjacent room – leave them there!

Go through the now open door with the first pair of characters. Collect the chest and then stand on the weight switch. Now go back and free the other pair. Kill the skeleton, who has the exit key, and leave the room to rejoin team.

Kill both skeletons and pull the secret switch which will open the next door. Collect the shield and go past the gargoyle in the dark. You will find two pits. Throw a fireball over them – this will activate a light teleporter at the end of the corridor. The pits will then disappear and you can proceed to open the lock and portcullis.

Kill the Valkyrie with fireballs. Buy any item (the third chest is recommended). Go through the door by placing something on the weight switch. Recharge any depleted item on the altar (this procedure can be used to resurrect a character). Have a drink, pull the switch and exit the room by pulling both switches on the outside of the door.

Now either proceed past the Valkyries, kill them, collect gold coin and open the next door with it, OR go right round and stand the characters by the sign 'Says nothing, Reveals much'. A secret wall will now open and you must enter. Collect the chest standing at the end. Pull the switch to open double doors. Send one character down the right steps and the others down the left steps into level four.

LEVEL 4 THE PRISON

Walk your single character all the way to the fountain (which is also a dead end). Now walk the other three over to a secret switch between the second and third wall torch. Do not bother with the floor switches. Push the secret switch and rejoin the first member of your party after the secret wall has opened and you have collected all the items.

Now carry on down the corridor. Avoid the last floor switch as this will warp you back. Make everyone read 'This message is for everyone'. Spend your coins and collect the chest which takes a little time to appear.

Now stand three of your party on the three floor switches. This will lead them to be kidnapped, but don't be alarmed – you can rejoin them later. Check each of the three – one of them will have to kill his cell mate. Once in the cells, look out for rats. Food and water is available and can be obtained by collecting the key by the doorway to the 'Bread and Water' cell.

Take the free character, collect the key that has appeared, open the leftmost door and collect waterball spell. Have a drink and continue down the corridor. Go through the small gap in the wall, which is the first gap to the character's left, and kill the fire demon with the waterball spells. When he dies, one cell will open and one of the previously imprisoned characters will join you. Leave the room the same way you entered it, but turn left and go right around to the portcullis and switch. Pull the switch and enter the room.

The switch also turns on the teleporter for a short period of time. Throw items into the teleporter. These will warp to a floor switch which closes pits. Now collect your items back and pull the switch, opening the cell. Now exit the room with three characters.

Turn left out of the room (the characters' left) and continue down the new corridor until the T-junction where you should also turn left. Pull the switch. Kill the minotaur and collect the chest which contains a key and coins. The key opens the last cell – do not forget the key you'll find in this cell by the door.

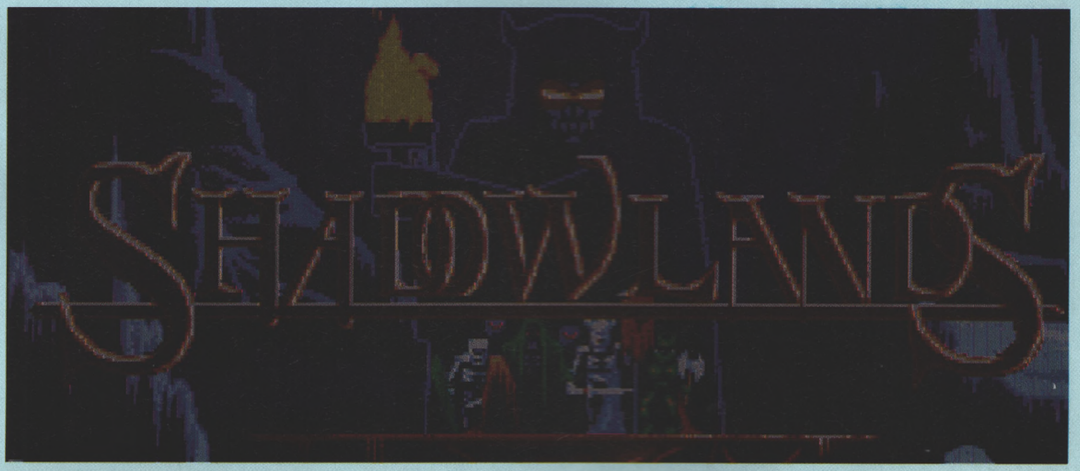
Now exit the room and turn right. Put the cell key in the lock and enter the dining room. Pull the switch in the corner, which will open the door. Buy some food and collect the chest. Have a drink. Now proceed into the Master Switch Room.

Do not pull switch four, as this action will let the monsters in. Kill the minotaur in the room. Use switches one, two and three to open the rooms and collect the key. It's best if you send someone in and wait for the key to appear but whatever you do, don't 'choose' key. Instead use the key on the last room and then descend the steps to level five.

LEVEL 5

Open the door by using the switch. Send one fighter into the room. Beware here, because the photo-receptor will pick him up and will open the monsters' doors. If possible let each monster out one at a time. Waste them, but at the same time keep an eye open for fire demons as they will light the photo-receptor and let all the monsters out themselves.

Have your eyes peeled here because one of the fire demons carries the exit key. The best advice is to kill him any way you can, then get all of your group through. Now spend the coin and use the altars. Your boys are going to be pretty hungry and perhaps thirsty too, so buy them refreshments, then send them all into the teleporter by leaving an item on the floor switch. Extinguish all light and exit through the new teleporter. Enter the 'One each' room. (It is wise to send your men into the corridors one at a time here.) Waste the skeleton and collect the key. ●



LEVEL 5 - KEY CODES

Use the following key combinations in the four locks to solve this corridor:

– Key 1 = Lock 4
– Key 2 = Lock 3
– Key 3 = Lock 2
– Key 4 = Lock 1

You can use the switches on the outside to free adjacent characters. All four keys are not needed to solve this.

If you're going to solve the next corridors two teams, each comprising of two men, will be needed. This is because each team helps the other to progress further. Use the following combination:

– Switch 1 closes Pit A
– Switch 2 closes Pit B

Get everyone through, stand together on the floor switch and enter the portcullis. Go to the 'Mystery Tour' switches and take one switch (A, B, C or D) each:

A – Light both photo-receptors. Keep light away from the doorway as invisible receptors create a skeleton. Collect the key.

B – Collect key, extinguish all torches and exit.

C – Collect the chest, kill the skeleton and leave all the items on 'Please give generously'. Go through the door and proceed through the second door. (NB: No items can be carried, but don't worry – you'll find them all back outside).

D – Collect the chest. Throw the fireball in the direction of arrow. It will warp X–Y–Z and the door will open.

Use the collected keys on three locks, wait for the doors to open, then proceed down the steps into level six.

That's all we've got room for until next month folks. Stay tuned though, 'cos that's when we're planning to 'do' the second half of the game.

DID WE GET ENOUGH FOOD?

What became of our heroic crew? Did they trigger all the right switches? Did they get killed by fire demons? Or what? Find out in next month's edition of AMIGA POWER!

TROUNCED?

Then you need...

THE LAST RESORT

with Jonathan Davies

Remove your finger from that lightbulb socket this instant, and let our friend and yours, the very special Jonathan Davies, squeeze your troublespots...

Nobody's perfect, as even I am sometimes forced to admit. So we set up The Last Resort to cater for those occasions when, no matter how hard you struggle, how many joysticks you break and how much hair you pull out, you simply can't get any further in a game. All you've got to do is jot down a brief description of your problem, send it in to me and I'll do my best to find a solution. And if I can't come up with an on-the-spot fix, I'll wager one of our readers will have the answer...

CORPORATION

Q "I've been playing for ages, yet I keep running out of drink and first aid or just get sent to Freddie for no reason at all. Have you got any suggestions?"
A Roberts, Craven Arms

A Well, basically, just stop being so crap. And make sure you've picked up the drinks dispenser from the dome near the start, along with the refill for it. And escape from prison using the bomb.

THE IMMORTAL

Q "I'm stuck at the end of Level 2. I've collected all the gems and got to the room where they're to be placed. Gresh told me to place the stones on to the holes in the order left, right and centre. I've tried this but nothing happens. What on earth's going on?"
Richard Leighton, Cowbridge

A Try the order right, left, centre instead. (Don't ask me why.)

LEMMINGS

Q "Could I have the code for Tricky Level 15, please? I can't get past level 14."
Kira Staddon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

A Sure. It's MDIBAJLNEP.

TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY

Q "I've got the cheat for flying, but I need one for immunity too."
Thomas Preston, Coventry

A Try typing EGGSONLEGS.

GODS

Q "I keep getting killed straight after the World Two door of *Gods*."
John Dougan, Prestonpans, Scotland

A Happily Craig Blackthorn of Wakefield in West Yorkshire recently send us a complete solution to much of this. Here goes: For a start, when in the shop buy INVISIBILITY, ALIEN FREEZE and a WEAPON INTENSIFIER. As you come out of the shop, select your invincibility quick, before the two aliens kill you. Now go quickly to the small hole at the far right of the screen with the spikes in it and collect the GIANT LEAP POTION. Leap out of the hole and kill the alien on the next ledge up, then select your alien freeze. Then jump onto the ledge, go across to the end of it, jump onto the next ledge up and set the switch. Now go across to the lowest platform that appears and collect the two crystals which appear on it. Now go to the long ladder and jump off onto the platform with the next switch on it. Now you have a choice: either walk along the bottom platform or the second one to make a SHORT CUT CRYSTAL appear. Collect this to be transported somewhere else in World Three.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST

Q "Do you know of a cheat?"
Robert Smith, Kingston

A I'm reliably informed that this might well work: when the last intro screen appears while the game's loading, hold down the joystick button and the left mouse button together until the disk swapping message appears.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Q "In *Monkey island* I've run aground on Le Chuck's ship but now I'm a bit stuck – how do I get the root for the cannibals so that they can cast their Spell of Exorcism on the Pirates?"
Martin Alesky, Leicester

A You'll find it in the glowing box. To open that you'll need the tools from the room with the squeaky door.

LOOSE ENDS

All this is giving me a bit of a headache, to tell the truth, so I think it's probably time to hand the question-and-answering over to you lot instead. To start with, if you know the answers to any of the following queries, please right in write away. Sorry, er, write in right away.

Q "How do you dispose of the caged bird in Level 1 of THE SIMPSONS? I can find no breadcrumbs!"
Howard Joseph, Leybourne

Q "I'm stuck on Level 3 of ALTERED BEAST. Is there any sort of cheat?"
Paul Hodson, Leatherhead

Q "In FUTURE WARS, I've found a magnetic card and a control device in the monastery. What are they for?"
Alan Thompson, Newtownards, N. Ireland

Q "In HARLEQUIN, I'm completely stuck. I can fix the clock, get on the kite, and I can do the jigsaw puzzle and the rooftop levels, but I can't get anywhere on the dream mile. What the hell do I do?"
Stuart Gidden, Peterborough

Q "I'm trying to get the radioactive rock from the Eastern Maze to the Western Gate. There are two ways, one blocked by a mega-powerful clam, the other by a door. What do I do?"
Ben Wheeler, Watford

Q "In LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2, I can't get off the lifeboat. I keep getting sunburnt, despite wearing the wig and throwing the spinach dip overboard. And on LARRY 3 I've collected the empty bottle, filled it with water and talked to Dale. What next?"
Nicholas Williams, Littlehampton

Q "I'm stuck in DUNGEON MASTER at a locked stairway, just in front of which is a mummy who's trapped behind a pit. On the wall it says: "This is my prisoner. Let him suffer." I've tried everything, but can't get down to the next level. I just get eaten by purple worms."
Scott Hallett, Leicester

CASES CLOSED

See – not everyone's quite as crap as me. Here's a whole flotilla of problems that have been solved with the help of you, The Readers.

FIRST SAMURAI

Q Michael Reilly of Van Nuys, USA was stuck on Level 2.

A "After getting through the blue spikes, get the two buckets from the top cavern. Then go back to the spikes and climb down the first wall with the nearest spike on it. Make sure you have a bell, and then jump the hole with the two lateral spikes in and use the teleport at the end of the lower cavern. This should take you to a wall of fire. Now use the bell, and kick that mutha's head in."
Matt Jones, Worcester

ROBOCOD

Q Michael Reilly of Van Nuys, USA – for it is he – was also having trouble getting past a bear. (Not having a great deal of luck, is he?)

A "Jump on one of the platforms (but not the middle one) and, as he falls, jump, pulling down on the joystick when you're in the air. If you land on his bonce five times he will die."
Anon, Farnham

THE SIMPSONS

Q John Somerton of Whyteleafe couldn't get out of the funhouse.

A "Just ride the platforms on the big wheel and continue out of the top of the screen and over onto the platform below. Continue right to exit the funhouse. And don't forget you can type COWABUNGA for infinite lives and EAT MY SHORTS to skip levels."
Anon, Farnham

CAPTAIN PLANET

Q Alex MacNeill of Hove was after a cheat for this one.

A "It's dead cunning, this one. You need a copy of *Captive*. Load *CP* and on the Level Selection screen wack *Captive* in there and press fire. The screen will say, 'Disk Error'. Re-insert your *CP* disk and the cheat will be active."
Matt Jones, Worcester.

EXILE

Q Tricky one, *Exile*. Chris Hartley from London couldn't see how to retrieve a small red object from a narrow tunnel.

A "It's a radioactive protection pill, in fact. To reach it, just lob a grenade in. If you aim it well enough it will land on top of the pill. A couple of well-placed bullets will knock the grenade off the pill and voila: the pill is blasted out. It's quite hard, but comes with practice."
Ben Wheeler, Watford

CADAVER

Q P Marshall of Sittingbourne was struggling with the game right at the end of Level 1.

A "Collect the fire shield from Kazah's tomb by dropping the golden funery coin on it. Get the jar that says, 'It's taboo to disturb the dead' and drop it on Lord Carolus's tomb. This should give you an unknown spell which you can read with the help of the Read Magic scroll. Go to the dragon (make sure you have the Crown of Kings – the REAL one) and walk in. Drink the Fire Shield potion and cast the unknown spell, now called 'Massacre'. The dragon should die in a shower of guts."
Anon, Farnham

FANTASY WORLD DIZZY

Q Gemma Cousins from Edesborough was stuck getting the last coin – "you know, the one in the space where the tree near the hippy is."

A "Go to the left of the tree where there is a mound. Move to the far right of the mound and press fire. You will pick up a clump of leaves revealing the coin which you can then pick up."
Paul Marsh, Wokingham

POLICE QUEST

Q Simon Dubeau of Brighton couldn't arrest the drunken driver OR finish the undercover mission in issue 13.

A "To arrest the drunken driver: give him a test, check his license, read him his Miranda rights, leave him in the jailer's custody. To complete the undercover mission: bleach your hair, leave everything that might give you away in the police station, keep the things that might come in handy, go to the Hotel Delphoria, get a room, accept the Death Angel's offer for a private game later on (you must have a voice transmitter), win some poker and you'll get invited to join Death Angel in his private room."
James Hampson, Catford

Phew, and that's about all we've got time (and, indeed, space) for this month. All I've got left to do, really, is remind you to read the nice little box at the bottom there...

Can you assist any of the puzzled readers above? If so, let me know and I'll pass on your advice. But then, perhaps you've got problems of your own. If that's the case, jot them down (no need to be shy) and I'll see what I can do. Nothing, probably, but someone out there in Readerland is bound to be able to help. Problem or solution, scribble it down as concisely and descriptively as possible and send it to The Last Resort, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Oh, and mark them 'Answers' or 'Questions' to make life easy.

AMIGA POWER

NEXT MONTH!

In the world's greatest Amiga games magazine!

NEW LOOK NEWS PAGES!

New regular columns (don't fret, Oh Dear... fans!), new giant previews and more (more! More!) pages!

Your complete buyer's guide to one of the most popular game genres ever – the vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up!

GIANT REVIEWS OF:

***Dune*/ Virgin**
***Wizkid*/ Ocean**
***Links*/ Access (US Gold)**
***Sensible Soccer*/ Renegade**
***Ugh!*/ Play Byte**
***Myth*/ System 3**
***Might & Magic III*/ New World (US Gold)**
***Lure Of The Temptress*/ Virgin**
***Epic*/ Ocean – yes, we really think we might get a finished version this month!**
And more! (These are just the ones we're planning as the issue you're reading goes to press – things could, of course, change a million times over the next four weeks.)

PLUS! 2 DISKS!

We're not telling you exactly what's on it, but you'll meet at least one caveman, one boy scout, one Xaragonian mothership, quite a few coloured blocks *(Wow! – Reader's voice.)* and a zillion, squillion things to kill!

It's all in the July issue of Amiga Power on sale Thursday 25th June. Don't miss it!

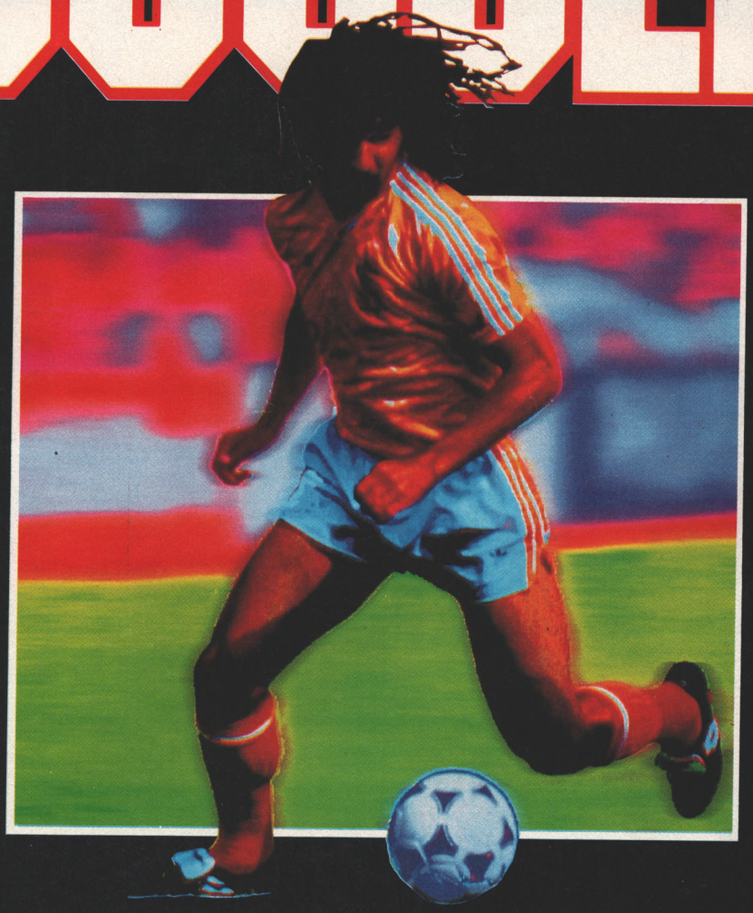
AMIGA POWER

So you want to be an artist?

Well if you do then you can't afford not to catch the July issue of **Amiga Format** replete with **Spectracolor Jr** (worth a stunning £60), the complete HAM paint program from Oxxi Aegis, giving you the power to use all of the Amiga's 4,096 colours at once.

We'll also show you the way to be creative, even if you lack the raw talent, and get the results you want in art, design and music the easy way... by cheating. But there's more than one way to get 15 minutes of fame 'cos on our second Coverdisk is a demo of Europress' **Easy AMOS**, the program that gives you the chance to write your very Amiga games. Get a life and get a copy.

Sensible SOCCER



European Champions

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★ NAMED SCORERS

Sensible SOFTWARE

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They're football crazy, they're football mad. Those software houses just can't get enough of the sport. Stuart Campbell deals the cards and blows the whistle on the new releases.

A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

That's right, 'soccer' fans, it's almost time for the European Championships in Sweden, where the best teams in Europe (plus, er, England and Scotland) battle it out for one of football's top trophies. To cash in – er, celebrate the occasion – the software industry has produced a veritable Mexican wave of footy-type games designed to part the punters from almost enough money to buy two pints of lager in Stockholm. *John Barnes European Football* is reviewed in this issue, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Join me, as I take a look at the rest of the field...

First a bit of history, eh? Well, Definition Of Sound in issue 9 covered this pretty comprehensively, so we won't go into things in too much depth. The bottom line is that Amiga football games are rubbish, with about two exceptions. One of them is *Manchester United Europe*; beautiful, addictive and extremely playable, and indeed the provider of much of the groundwork for *John Barnes European Football*. The other is, of course, *Kick Off*.

THERE'S KENNY DALGLISH IN THERE... OH, WHAT A GOAL!

But enough already – I think you all pretty much know our various opinions on *Kick Off* and its 'illustrious' sequel by now, so we won't bother going into it in any more depth. Suffice to say, the *Kick Off* games changed the rules for computer soccer and, for better or for worse, every football game released after those two has to be not only a good game in its own right, but also has to be seen to be better than *Kick Off*. Mind you, with *Kick Off 3* well under way, maybe the goalposts are in for another bit of shifting soon...

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMP

Domark

Confusingly, the goalies in *European Football Champ* seem to have the same colour of strip as the outfield players...

Before we really start, though, time for a quick 'Stop Press'-type bit. *European Football Champ* from Domark (a conversion of a Taito coin-op) should have had the full in-depth review treatment in this issue, but a bit of last-minute programming delay put paid to that idea.

What we've seen is a near-complete version, missing a few of the cleverer trick shots, the graphical frills (such as the camera zooms you get whenever anything interesting happens) and some of the more drastic fouls, but more or less intact apart from that. It's a fast-moving and action-packed effort (as you'd expect from anything which has to take regular arcade money for its living), and it boasts a few novel ideas too, the most immediately appealing being the fat comedy referee who can't keep up with the game's super-athletic players and frequently falls flat on his face, allowing for some brutal illegal tackling to go unpunished. The graphics are very like the coin-op, all bright colours and exaggerated animation, and the game plays pretty smoothly, with lots of scope for actually getting the ball in the net (no super-talented goalies with a single exploitable weakness here) and hence lots of top rewarding fun. That's about all we can tell you at the moment, but this one isn't looking bad at all, and we're looking forward to seeing the finished product in plenty of time for a full review next month.

THREE GAMES OF TWO HALVES

So, let's take a look at how the battle's shaping up. Incredibly conveniently, the six big summer releases divide neatly into three pairs of similar styles. Two of them shape up as games very much in the traditional computer game vein, two of them borrow heavily from one of the more popular console types, and two of them look very like the current standard in coin-op soccer.

Over the next three pages we'll get a little more in-depth on each one, finishing with our wild guess at which of the teams competing in this year's European Championship each game most closely resembles (England and Scotland excepted, for reasons of office harmony) and hence the odds on it proving to be the biggest success (courtesy of Ladbrokes). If you're a betting man, this could be your passport to riches... (Or not.)

THE COMPUTER APPROACH

SENSIBLE SOCCER

Renegade

This is the one that's really setting out to steal *Kick Off*'s crown as the best Amiga football game of all time, and, it has to be said, its chances look good. Playing in essentially the same style as Anco's game, *Sensible Soccer* differs in that it's depicted on a much smaller scale, with a much larger area of the pitch on view at a time. Sensible have said that they're trying to write a game both for fans of *Kick Off* and for all those people who couldn't stand it. I had a word with the team's star striker, the eminently Sensible Jon Hare...

What do you see as your main competition?

Well, we're out to top *Kick Off* rather than any of the other current stuff, but frankly it looks like no competition. The feedback we've been getting from all quarters, especially from the demo that went on AMIGA POWER, seems to suggest that everyone who liked *Kick Off* thinks this is better, and everyone who hated *Kick Off* thinks *Sensible Soccer* is fab.

What unique features are you offering?

How many do you want? We think the passing in *Sensible Soccer* is unmatchable – it's simple and instinctive, you can do it at any time, and it's totally accurate. There's the match highlights feature, where you can store up to 10 replays from a game and then watch them in chronological sequence at the end. We've got accurate details of 100 clubs, European and national teams, with correct strips and squads. Then there's the small scale, which lets you play a far more tactical game. In *Kick Off* you had no real option than to play a simple kick-and-rush style, but in our game you've got the choice of playing like that or opting for a passing game. And of course, we've got a disk full of authentic international crowd sounds for that real big match atmosphere, not to mention great music from Captain Sensible, and *(cont p246 – Ed)*.

Have you tried to concentrate on the simulation aspect or were you more interested in simply a good game, with accuracy second?

I think we've gone for a balance between the two. I mean, for total realism you'd have to have the game stopping for two minutes at a time while players rolled around pretending to be injured and stuff, but at the same time I think our game looks and plays more realistically than any other one we've seen.

If Sensible Soccer *was a real footballer, which one would it be?*

I think I'd describe it as a subtle cross between the elegant artistry of Glenn Hoddle and the uncompromising brutality of Vinny Jones – it's a pretty vicious game at times.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

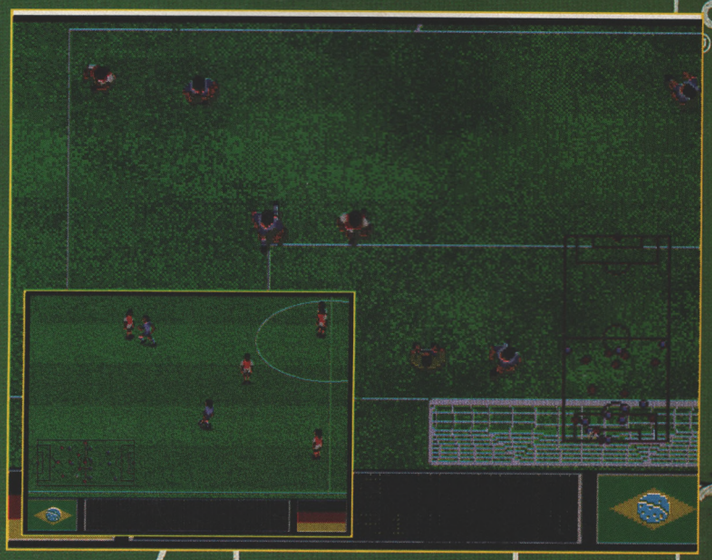
From what we've seen so far, *Sensible Soccer* is perfectly poised to walk away with the honours. With its outstanding playability and realism, this has to be the Germany of the forthcoming batch. It's got the biggest hype to live up to of any of the games here, but unless something goes horribly wrong, we're looking at a sure-fire cast-iron classic.

5-2

***Sensible Soccer* – you've played the demo, need we say more?**

WORLD CLASS SOCCER

Audiogenic



***World Class Soccer* – top-down *Kick Off* mode and (inset) *John Barnes* left-to-righter.**

Okay, so this one isn't really in the same style as *Kick Off* or *Sensible Soccer*, but it's got a top-down view, so for the sake of tidiness we'll say it is for now. After impressive success (at the second attempt) with their *World Class Rugby*, Audiogenic have turned their hand to the round-ball game with a product that looks like the last word in slickness. Offering a choice between top-down view or side-on 3D perspective (switchable at any time), *World Class Soccer* should cater to two very different types of footy game fan, as well as providing a welcome return of the *International Soccer/Match Day* look for nostalgic reviewers everywhere. I put it to Audiogenic's midfield dynamo Peter Calver that his boys were going to have to give 110 percent effort on this one...

What do you see as your main competition?

It's got to be *Sensible Soccer*, but from what we've seen of it *World Class Soccer* is a much better game. *Kick Off 2* is no problem. Sensible actually say they know what's in *Kick Off 3* and that their game is better than it, but if our game is better than that, well... As far as I can see, our game does everything *Sensible Soccer* does and a lot more.

What unique features are you offering?

The main hook is going to be the dual viewpoint, obviously. It gives players the best of both worlds, with the prettiness of side-on 3D and the playability of the overhead perspective. Also though, we think we've come up with a control system that people are going to look back on fondly in years to come. I don't want to give too much away right now, but I think everyone's going to be impressed. When we set out to do this game, we asked lots and lots of different people for opinions, and what we found was that even among the ones who really liked *Kick Off 2*, most of them said their least favourite thing about it was the control. I think our system goes further than anything else we've seen. We're proud of the replay system too – not only can you replay goals scored in one mode in the other mode, but you can also scroll right around the screen in replay mode to see what's going on at any corner of the pitch.

Have you tried to concentrate on the simulation aspect or were you more interested in simply a good game?

A game, definitely. With our previous football game, the *Emlyn Hughes* licence, we made the mistake of not updating the basic technology from the original 8-bit game. With this one, we've designed the game specifically and solely to take advantage of the features of a one meg Amiga – there are things happening in this game that just wouldn't be possible on any other format.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

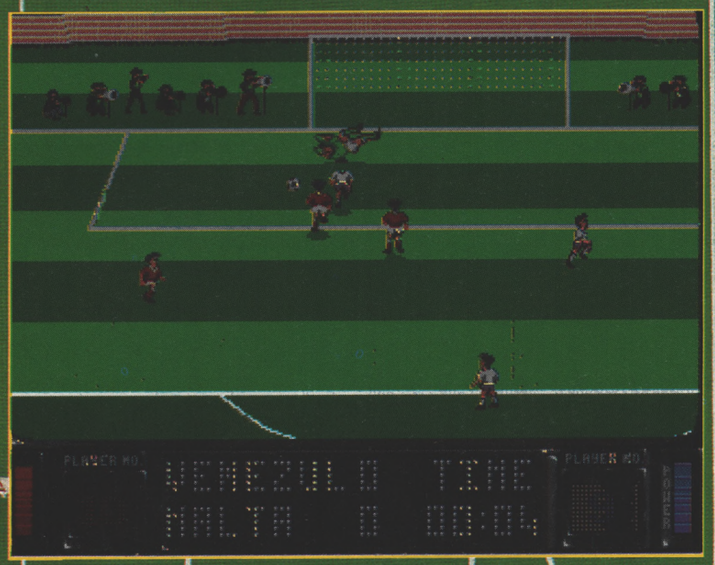
Though not actually due on the pitch until the end of August, I reckon *World Class Soccer* has a feel of Holland about it. Slick, elegant, total football is what's promised here and the chances of it coming up with the goods have to be highly rated.

6-1

THE CONSOLE APPROACH

STRIKER

Rage



***Striker* – fast, sexy and different, we think you're going to like this one!**

New software house Rage – formed from the core of ex-Ocean development team Special FX – make their debut with this game. The team are now dividing their attentions between developing for other companies ('to keep the money coming in') and publishing their own stuff, but they've got a lot riding on this one. It's in a style not previously seen on the Amiga, with a second-person perspective viewed from slightly above and behind the ball. This viewpoint has achieved considerable success with *Formation Soccer* on the PC Engine and Super NES consoles, so if Rage can pull it off properly they could have a winner on their hands. I asked their flying winger Paul Finnegan who he thought the team with the most goals at the end of the 90 minutes would be...

What do you see as your main competition?

The game that's had the biggest hype is *Sensible Soccer*, so that's the one we've really got to beat. We're not particularly worried about the *Liverpool* game at the moment at all.

What unique features are you offering?

The most obvious thing is the new viewpoint, which lets you see more of the pitch at a time. You can tilt the angle of view to suit yourself, too. We've got 64 international teams, each with its own individual strengths and weaknesses – Germany are a really strong all-round team, while Brazil play a skilful close-control game, for example – and the game judges how well you're doing and gives you better teams to take on as you progress. The weather conditions vary too, it's really realistic in the rain with players skidding around and slipping and stuff. Most importantly, though, we simply think we've got the playability spot-on – you really feel you're in control of this game.

Have you tried to concentrate on the simulation aspect or were you more interested in simply a good game, with accuracy second?

Definitely a game. We're not really concerned about being accurate at all, to be frank. A lot of the other games coming out seem to have tried to be really pretty and look nice, but we're more bothered that it feels right. We've done everything we can to keep it fast, and you can cut down on detail to make it even faster – you can remove the cameramen behind the goals, even the pitch markings if you want. Playability is everything here.

If Striker was a real footballer, which one would it be?

Gary Lineker for sure. Everything about him is right for us – he's a striker, he's currently the leading scorer in the league, and he's a totally nice chap to boot. In fact, he's the sort of man I'd like my daughter to marry.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

It's quite a way short of finished at the moment, but it looks like *Striker* could well turn out to be the France of this competition – fast and skilful, with lots of attacking flair. The 'remove the pitch markings' option sounds a bit dubious, though.

4-1

LIVERPOOL THE COMPUTER GAME

Grandslam

We haven't heard from Grandslam for a long time, but they're back (back! BACK!) with a vengeance, or rather with a football game licensed from arguably the best team of the last decade. This is actually the second *Liverpool* licence, but we'll draw a discreet veil over the first one, and instead note that this game also borrows *Formation Soccer*'s display and, at the moment, looks eerily similar in style to *Striker*. But – hey! – that's impossibly handy for the purposes of this feature, so we've got no complaints at all. I wondered what Grandslam's stalwart full-back Paul Chamberlain thought of the notion that whatever the manager did, it was all down to the eleven sprites on the pitch in the final analysis...

What do you see as your main competition?

Obviously *Sensible Soccer*, because it's really set itself up as the target to hit, but we're also looking to produce something better than *Kick Off 2*, because we want to improve on the best game currently on the market. *Striker* is a direct contender, too.

What unique features are you offering?

What we've concentrated on – uniquely, I think – is the set-piece aspect of the game. Other Amiga football products have largely ignored the potential of free kicks, corners and so on, but we've really tried to make the most of these bits of the game. Also, we've finely tuned the heading side of things, with the result that the heading in our game is more accurate and true-to-life than anything we've seen before. We think this is the first game of the type where you can properly do an overhead bicycle-kick volley, too. We've basically tried to take a new and original approach to the idea of a computer football game, what with the new viewpoint and new features.

Have you tried to concentrate on the simulation aspect or were you more interested in simply a good game?

We've gone for the simulation side, I suppose. This is a more realistic game, with more plays and more scope for authentic tactics than the rest. It's got proper league, FA Cup and European Cup tournaments in there too – with the new 'super-league' European Cup structure for complete authenticity. At the same time though, we want a really playable game – something as fluid as *Kick Off*, but which adds in all the bits that *Kick Off* really lacked, like controllability.

If Liverpool The Computer Game *was a real footballer, which one would it be?*

Well, it'd have to be a Liverpool player, and I'd go for Steve McManaman – he's young, fresh, exciting and inspirational.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

Unproven but promising, the best analogy for *Liverpool* in this context is probably the Championship hosts, Sweden. There's certainly plenty of speed on show here, but it remains to be seen if it can translate into a controllable and playable game.

7-1

It could be good, but will Manchester United, Leeds and Everton fans buy it too?

THE COIN-OP APPROACH

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 92

Elite

One of the biggest coin-ops in recent memory, but can the Amiga handle it?

Another resurrection, as Elite (remember them?) mark their return to the Amiga fray with a coin-op conversion. 'But I don't remember a coin-op called *European Championship 92*', I hear you all wail in bemusement, but that's because Elite's game is, in fact, a conversion of Tecmo's enormously popular arcade title *World Cup 90*. Shrewdly, Elite have decided that going out with a name like that wouldn't be the smartest decision, so a few quick tweaks, a new moniker and hey presto, the perfect event licence. Well, maybe. I suggested to Elite's veteran goalkeeper Steve Wilcox that although football was a man's game, this tackle on the competition might be a bit on the late side...

What do you see as your main competition?

To be honest, I don't think we're really competing with anything with this title. Rather than just coming up with another football game in what's a very busy market, with everyone making impressive but – as yet – unsubstantiated claims about their game, this is hopefully a product where buyers will know what they're getting in advance – a coin-op conversion.

What unique features are you offering?

Again, we're not really saying anything about *European Championship* that people don't already know. The coin-op was the most successful arcade football game for years – it shipped 12,000 PCBs in Europe and around 8,000 pirate versions appeared too, compared with an average of about 2,000 for a coin-op in Europe these days – and we think it pretty much speaks for itself. What we hope to come up with is as faithful a copy of that coin-op as possible, and if we can do that I think we'll have a success on our hands. We're still two or three weeks of tweaking short of a finished Amiga version, but the PC version looks very good indeed.

If European Championship 92 *was a real footballer, which one would it be?*

Well, it's pretty nimble and pretty skillful, so I'd say it had to be Gary Lineker.

And when's it coming out?

It should be available around the end of May.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

Talented, solid, but terminally unglamorous is the eternal perception of the troubled Yugoslavian team, and that could well be the same fate that befalls *European Championship 92*. As a coin-op conversion a certain level of success is pretty much guaranteed, but it's unlikely to really seize the imagination of the critics or the real plaudits that only come with original games.

6-1

EUROPEAN SUPER SOCCER

Flair

This is the dark horse in the race. Creative Edge is a new development team, and *Euro Soccer* (the probable title, the name is actually under discussion at the moment) is their first entry into the Amiga market. With Flair just confirmed as publisher, the game is well under way, and it looks very similar to *European Championship 92*, with the same sideways-on forced-perspective viewpoint. I discussed the merits of the Eatennacio system of software releasing with Creative Edge's formidable sweeper and captain, Dave Wightman...

What do you see as your main competition?

On the strength of hype alone, *Sensible Soccer* is the one to beat, but there's also obvious competition from *European Championship 92* which is the same kind of thing as our title. Gameplay-wise, though, we're not worried about anyone.

What unique features are you offering?

We've gone to town on presentation with our game, in a way that I don't think's been done before. There're 400 frames of animation on the players alone (done by Chris Hill of PD *Mr Potato Head* demo fame), and lots of little cameos when anything happens. Speech samples are heavily used, with different and authentic commentators depending on which team you're playing, and the teams themselves have different characteristics modelled on their real-life counterparts. We've got full-screen penalty shoot-outs, and weather conditions which affect the play too.

Have you tried to concentrate on the simulation aspect or were you more interested in simply a good game?

This is a pure arcade-type product. We haven't spent months and months getting the rules absolutely right – if we could make the game faster and smoother by say, doing away with offside, then that's what we did. We've got some classic arcade brutality in there too – as well as the usual sliding tackles, our game lets you barge and shoulder charge the opposing players, to the degree that if a player takes enough punishment he'll actually die! The crucial thing here is that the game is playable and enjoyable – I didn't like *Kick Off 2* at all, and I'm much more into things with a bit of playability and decent presentation. That said, we *have* based the structure of the game on the real European Championships.

If Euro Soccer *was a real footballer, which one would it be?*

He's nippy, he's cheeky, and everybody loves him – it could only be Gordon Strachan really, couldn't it?

AT THE END OF THE DAY

Euro Soccer is the real unknown quantity here, which is something it has in common with the team of the CIS (formerly the USSR). Previously a real force to be reckoned with, the newly-divided CIS side has yet to be really tested in combat, as it were, but like them, *Euro Soccer* looks like it could potentially come out of nowhere with the goods. At the moment, we just don't know.

7-1

Big pitch, little sprites – could *European Super Soccer* be *Kick Off* Meets The Coin-Ops?

THE COMPUTER APPROACH

The crowd are on the pitch, they think it's... *(Oh shut up – Ed.)*

"But wait", I hear you all cry, "this is all very well for arcade junkies, but what about all of us out here who hanker after the more intelligent side of the football game – the management sim. It's been ages since a decent footy management game came out, you'd think someone would have had the foresight to release one to coincide with the Euro Championship."

Ah, but they have. Not one, not two, but three software houses have done just that. US Gold's *The Manager* is reviewed this month, but let's see what we've still got to look forward to in the heart-attack-inducing sideline stakes...

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

Domark

Statistics oozing from every pore – mathematicians will love *Championship Manager*.

Domark have enlisted the help of such noted Amiga games experts as Graeme 'Big studs and dodgy ticker' Souness (Liverpool manager), Ron 'Jewellery and cigars' Atkinson and Steve 'No particularly interesting features' Coppell (Crystal Palace) to help plug *Championship Manager*, "the most realistic football game ever". Old Graeme even goes so far as to say "It's more fun than the real thing", although that could be interpreted in a number of ways at the moment.

The game has been seven years in development, and boasts a formidable array of statistical info. Up to four people can play simultaneously, controlling characters from a selection of 650 coaches, managers, physios, trainers and scouts, and 2500 players (with complete career histories and individual characteristics, of course) from 80 league, non-league and European clubs.

Domark's Alyson Stroud was pretty excited when I spoke to her about this one. "*Championship Manager* has everything you could ever need in a football game – it's been designed and written by some complete football fanatics, with total realism the only consideration."

There's no denying that, from what we've seen of it, this is far and away the most detailed footy management sim Amiga gamers have ever been offered. The only potential fly in the ointment is the lack of graphical match highlights. For many people (myself included, as it happens) these are the pay-off of footy management games, the reward for all that ploughing through screen after screen of statistics and strategic information. The number-crunching perfectionist approach is a bit of a gamble on Domark's part. How well it pays off, only the charts will tell.

Championship Manager should be released as you read this, at a price of £24.99.

GRAHAM TAYLOR'S SOCCER CHALLENGE

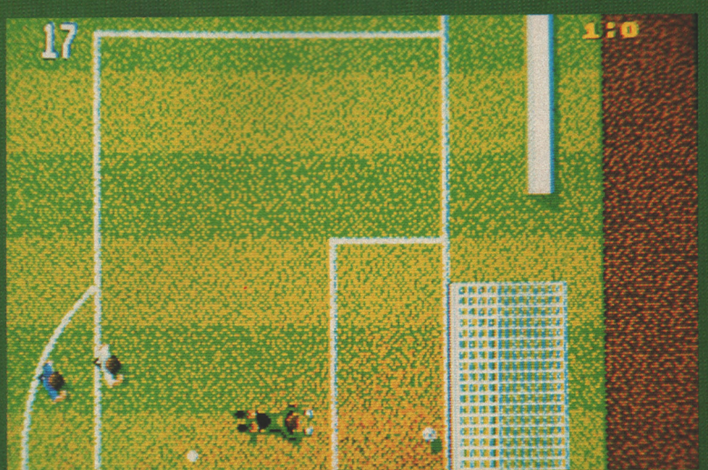
Krisalis

But wait! Could it be – surely not? – that there's a game more realistic than *Championship Manager*? Krisalis seem to think so. I spoke to Rob Hill, programmer of *Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge*.

"This is the only football management game that's realistic down to the last detail. We took the Football League rulebook and implemented every single rule that we possibly could. We've got correct, up-to-date leagues with the correct numbers of teams in, all with full and correct squads, including even the most recent transfers. All the English leagues are included, including the new Premier League and the Vauxhall Conference, and although you can't actually manage any Scottish or European teams, they're still in there so you can buy players from them. We're especially proud of the transfer system, actually. It's got all the proper league rules about transfer deadlines and so on, realistically-calculated transfer fees, and even a geographically-sensitive loan system. We've taken no artistic licence with this game at all – it's pure, total realism. We're not worried about *Championship Manager* at all, we're more realistic than them."

Blimey. Strong words there from Rob, but since at the time of writing we've seen absolutely nothing of the game at all, we're just going to have to take his word for it for now. Where *Graham Taylor's Soccer Challenge* definitely scores over *Championship Manager* is in the graphic reward department – the game features a full match display section, where you can choose to watch (in *Kick Off*-lookalike overhead view style) your team's match, or indeed any other match that's taking place at any time.

Could we finally have a football management game on our hands that's as much fun as *Football Manager*, as well as being an accurate simulation of one of the most stressful jobs in the world? Only time will tell, but by the time you read this you should have the opportunity to find out for yourself.



One of *Graham Taylor's* highlights screens – a welcome respite from all those statistics.

The Electronic Ant Colony

SIMANT™

PCF

Dunc: Sim City was like a drug – you got hooked on it. If you've played it, I'm sure you'll go along with me. *Sim Earth*, I have to admit, I never really went for – the screenshots on the back of the packaging put me off. Complex or what? – and I'm a bit thick, when it comes right down to it. So *Sim Ant* had me worried – could I pull it off? Here's exactly what happened.

STEP ONE: I loaded *Sim Ant* up and clicked on things to see what they did. It was six o'clock in the evening.

STEP TWO: I discovered what they did. It was six-twenty.

STEP THREE: I became completely obsessed. I was an ant. I made my first little barrier out of rocks, I quashed an incoming tide of army reds by leading a spider towards them. I discovered why it was useful to keep pebbles inside my nest. And more.

STEP FOUR: I won my first game – it was six o'clock in the morning. I finally went to bed at seven and slept until lunchtime. (And then watched Home And Away. So nothing unusual there. Ed.)

And I've been hooked ever since, even though I've already finished the game several times. It says in the manual (which is excellent, if a little corny) that "*Sim Ant* isn't a game, it's a software 'toy' – a backyard filled with ant colonies." And it's right, of course. Whereas *Sim City* never really ended, *Sim Ant* ends quite often, but always in a different way. There's even an Experimental mode, where you can build ant arenas and mazes – place as many ants of either colour wherever you want and then test them, or just kill them. Whatever. It's a *Sim Ant* construction editor, basically.

What more can I say? I've killed real ants in every way imaginable: flaming petrol, boiling water, magnifying glasses, gunpowder and loads more besides, but *Sim Ant* has proved to be the most fun of all. And even Buddhists can enjoy *Sim Ant*, because nothing really dies. Brilliant stuff – legendary almost. (Alright, alright, no need to go over the top. Ed.)

STOP

GRAPHICS 93 ADDICTIVENESS 94 SOUND 90 EXECUTION 93 OVERALL 93

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STICK A J FOR J

A game is only as good as the stick that it's played with. Tim Smith goes in search of the ultimate handheld thrill.

A joystick is a joystick is a joystick – *not*! If you've just forked out £20 for a piece of hi-tech plastic and metal in order to get every last second of value from a game (which you more than likely also paid at least £20 for) then you're going to want to make sure you get the right one. There are few things more irritating in a game player's life than being stuck with a weak, unresponsive/over responsive, under-functioned joystick – especially when you could have paid similar money for something twice as good.

In the interests of encouraging wise purchasing practises, then, we now present 1992's first real joystick review, featuring all the main playing peripherals the hardware manufacturers were brave enough to offer for test – others were invited to take part, but for whatever reasons failed to supply us with review samples.

The sticks are rated on responsiveness, strength and how long they look like they are going to last. They are *not* rated on how they look – we'll let you be the judge of that.

NAVIGATOR
Konix £15.99

Let's make a joystick that looks like a gun from Captain Scarlet. Right, and let's give it a tiny central stick and a trigger fire button. And let's make sure that after a few hours play it bites into the top of your thumb. It's easy to mock the Navigator, but the fact remains that quite a few people I spoke to swear by it – it's certainly more usable for more people than it's traditional rival the Speedking, though, in my view, the recent Bug makes them both look pretty sad. In the interests of balance, I'm going to resort to that classic reviewers phrase 'If you like this sort of thing then this is the sort of thing you'll like', though, to be honest, I hated every minute with it.

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★
Sore hands factor:	★★★
Overall:	3+2–3 = 2

SIGMA-RAY
Euromax £13.49

Big and blue with lots of buttons – this looks like it should really live in the cockpit of a (cheapskate) F-16. Certainly, if you want an impressive piece of late '60s sci-fi art deco on your desk then this is the one for you. It looks so tackily great that you just *have* to own it. (There's our promise not to rate things on looks out of the window...) Luckily, it plays very well too.

There are fire buttons everywhere, from two on the base to a tiny, one shot button to the left of the stick-head one. The Sigma-ray feels as solid as a rock too, while the autofire button is ideally placed (even if it is too small for the anyone over the age of 8 years). Not great for platform games or sports sims, but for flight sims and shoot-'em-ups it's wonderful.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★★
Overall:	5+4–2 = 7

125 SPECIAL
Cheetah £9.99

A slightly unusual design, this one, with the base being a bit more intelligently designed than most sticks – it's narrower and thinner at the fire-button end, making it more comfortable to hold. It's main selling points are the four independently-programmable buttons and the bizarre rotational facility (useful, for example, when you want separate directions of firing and movement at the same time), but, as software support for these advanced features is practically non-existent, what you're left with is a reasonable, solid but unremarkable stick. It's a bit big and clumsy for *Kick Off 2*, but the autofire works and it doesn't make your hand hurt.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★★
Overall:	4+3–2 = 5

Here's how we work out the final scores: we award stars for durability and ease of use, add them together, take away (negative) stars for how much they hurt your hands and voila!

ROUND JOY

PROFESSIONAL 9000 DELUXE
Euromax £13.99

It's got Rapid fire, rather than Autofire (there's a silly baseball hat for anyone who can tell the difference), but it's as stiff as hell – that's the Professional 9000. (Why do people insists on putting utterly meaningless numbers into computer-related equipment ? I'm pretty sure that it is *not* version number 9000...) Still, it looks like it will last forever – and it needs to in order to get rid of the incredible stiffness in the main stick – though during play it clicks like a room full of angry cicadas. Good for playing oldies like *Ghouls'n'Ghosts* that require accurate fire and jump options.

Durability (presumed): ★★★★★
Ease of use: ★★★
Sore hands factor: ★★
Overall: 5+3–2 = 6

MACH 1 MICROSWITCH JOYSTICK
Cheetah £12.99

Well, this gets the prize for the longest name. It's simple in styling and with four easily accessible fire buttons, with the autofire behind the shaft to the left and easily accessible. Unhappily, though, the whole affair has a flimsy feel – I can't really say I think it'll last for too long – which is obviously one of the tradeoffs you get for this low price. It's doesn't seem certain if it's a flightstick or a straight joystick– doing both jobs averagely well – and looks and feels more like a good pressie buy than one you'd want to spend your own money on. It left me indifferent really.

Durability (presumed): ★★★
Ease of use: ★★★
Sore hands factor: ★
Overall: 3+3–1 = 5

STAR PROBE
Cheetah £14.99

Another aircraft-style stick with four fire buttons and autofire. Yet again the microswitching clicks – this time with more sound than a platoon of SS men's boot-heels on meeting the Fuhrer – but if you like the impression of a flightdeck when playing *F-15* then at least it'll look right. The joint on the plastic moulding for the stick-shaft looks about as wide as it can go without actually splitting the device in two, and, in general, the workmanship leaves a great deal to be desired. The autofire button is inaccessible, being directly in front of the shaft, too. A bit of a dog really.

Durability (presumed): ★★★
Ease of use: ★★★
Sore hands factor: ★
Overall: 3+3–1 = 5

ANALOG PLUS
Suncom £27.99

This is one of those aircraft looking thingies that comes straight out of the States. And it's analog too – a strange addition to the Amiga's digitial armoury. Although the Analog Plus comes with a box stating that it is only compatible with the IBM PC and Apple II (the Apple II still *exists*?) it now comes with an Amiga adaptor too. The flightstick feel is comfortable, and the curly cable enables you to stand up and wander about for a while getting to grips with games like *Harlequin*. It has four fire buttons, autofire with fire-rate selector, and a solid feel. If you can cope with the idea of using an analog stick (and that adaptor) then this could prove an excellent investment.

Durability (presumed): ★★★★
Ease of use: ★★★★
Sore hands factor: ★
Overall: 4+4–1 = 7

ZOOMER
Euromax £59.95

A giant-size yoke stick to compete with the Turbo Fighter, but with one significant fault – the Zoomer doesn't come with a clamp! This means you have to rely on the suckers to keep it fixed to the desk while you wrench the controls around trying to avoid MiGs in *F-15 Strike Eagle II* – which is, predictably enough, a dead loss. That aside, it's sexier-looking and seems better made than the Cheetah job, but you have to rock it backwards and forwards (instead of pushing it in and out), making it a bit uncomfortable for driving games. (And useless for platformers.)

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★
Sore hands factor:	★★
Overall:	3+2–2 = 3

QUICKJOY FOOTPEDAL
Bondwell £24.95

Mmm, yes. Things are getting weird here. This is not exactly a joystick, it is a joystick add-on, if you can imagine that. What happens is the joystick connects to the Amiga via a through-connector, with the footpedal attaching straight into the joystick port. It comes with three big pedals that can take over control from the joystick fire buttons. While this is pointless in platformers or straight shoot-'em-ups, in games like *Indy 500* or *F-15 Strike Eagle* it is a real boon, as many of the keyboard commands can also be swapped. A driving game of any complexity takes on a whole new complexion when you can actually change gear, or use the gas pedal with your feet while concentrating on steering with the joystick. However, you *do* have to be manically into gamesplaying (or have a very generous auntie come birthday time) to buy one.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	4+4–1 = 7

MEGASTAR
Kempston £26.99

You have to be kidding me here! This transparent plastic, bright orange affair is just awful. Too big, too wide, too stiff and too clicky. Never has it been so obvious that a stick has microswitches – you can tell by the way they scream at you every time you try to force the stick into position. The three enormous fire buttons are positioned almost completely in the wrong place too – right up front so that you have to lean into them to play. What else can I say? This is all (vile) looks and no playabilty. In a word, avoid.

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★
Sore hands factor:	★★★
Overall:	3+2–3 = 2

TURBO FIGHTER
Cheetah £49.99

To be honest, this isn't the kind of thing that was really ever intended for use with the Amiga. Mainly designed as an analogue yoke for PC flight sims, the Turbo Fighter does, however, function as an ordinary digital controller. Turning the yoke from side to side performs the usual left-right functions, but for up and down you have to push the handles in or out. This unfortunately (because the suckers are as useless as ever) necessitates clamping it to a desk (clamp provided), but if you can find the required (vast) amount of space, and have the kind of desk you can clamp it to, then it's actually quite a cute way to play *Lotus 2*, *Big Run* or whatever (and more fun for *Kick Off 2* than you might imagine). I can't recommend using it for *Harlequin*, though...

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore elbows(!) factor:	★★
Overall:	3+4–2 = 5

TORTOISE
Cheetah £9.99

You have to be wary of a joystick that comes with the word 'fragile' written on the box (we think it's a joke). What we have here is not really a joystick, it's more like a motion pad with three fire buttons at the front. You put your hand on the back of it and press your palm in the direction you want your chosen sprite to go. Well, that's the theory, at least. I found it nearly unusable, but a jolly good laugh to look at. (In fact, while playing *The Godfather*, I had this incredible urge to take the tortoise and drop it in the bath.) A fairly funny joke, but that's about it really.

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	3+3–1 = 5

ULTIMATE
Euromax £29.99

At last – some hot autofire action! This model doesn't have throttle control (good for flight sims) and you *will* need a large desk space – or some pretty Robbie Coltrane-size thighs – to accomodate it, but aside from that it has plenty of appeal. It even has fire buttons that can be set up for the left or right-handed. This, when you think about it, comes in very handy when making banked turns or flipping positions in a platform game. Frankly I liked it, for all its high(ish) price and OTT looks. It has to be said, though, that if you like holding a stick in your lap you might be better off looking elsewhere.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	4+4–1 = 7

125+
Cheetah £9.99

Holy Mother Of Divine Providence, it's another old favourite. The 125+ used to be one of my personal favourites in the days before I discovered the Gravis (very expensive American joystick – well worth checking out). It has all the problems of the other Cheetahs – poor moudling, spongy feel and autofire at the front of the shaft – but it is small enough to fit comfortably in the hand, and cheap. It isn't too large (unlike many flightsticks) and the lack of loud clicking means you can concentrate on what you're doing. Not at all bad, though I feel its time has passed somewhat.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	4+3–1 = 6

CRUISER
Powerplay £10.99

Ah, one of the classics. It's big, it comes in many colours, it has two fire buttons and, joy upon joy, the stick itself has a mechanism at its base that enables you to alter the stiffness. This last one is an absolute godsend and should be built into every joystick produced from now on in.

Now that the praise has been heaped, it's time for a little bit of vitriol. The Cruiser is too light. Forget the pretty colours – this thing slides off your leg or desk, and almost floats out of your hand in the heat of action. When playing the cutesy *Titus the Fox* – a game requiring some pretty slick timing – I found myself regularly dropping the damned thing! How very silly.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	4+3–1 = 6

SPEEDKING
Konix £10.99

An old stager now, Konix's Speedking has been around for years, carving itself a little niche of popularity with many users. It's a funny one to get to grips with, but, once you've got used to the hand-shaped grip, it's a snappy, precise and responsive stick. Unfortunately, the firing mechanism requires some strenuous effort from your forefinger, and the ergonomic positioning of the fire button means that after 10 minutes on any decent shoot-'em-up the little bit between your finger and thumb will be aching like crazy (the odd shape means you can't easily swap hands). Still not bad, but the appearance of The Bug has convincingly trumped it as the handheld champion.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★★★
Overall:	4+3–3 = 4

THE BUG

A firm favourite in the AMIGA POWER office. Although this tiny little black, two button jobbie doesn't look like it will last for more than six months of intense gameplay, it has many good points to make up for it. It's easy on the hand – with both buttons (the wee bug's eyes) in easy reach of fore and index fingers – though if you have big hands, the diminutive size of The Bug could cause you some major problems. However, for the more average among us, it makes a pleasant, comfortable fit. (In fact after a few games of the joystick-intensive *Kick Off II*, I almost forgot that I had The Bug in my hand.) It is possible for the fire buttons to stick, but other than that, an excellent, comfortable stick. A special mention also for the autofire too – probably the most effective and reliable of any of the joysticks reviewed.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall:	4+5–1 = 8

Joysticks are really a must for nearly all the fast-action shoot-'em-ups and platform games that litter the market. That being the case, surely the games creators have tried nearly all of them, and will have a few tips on which they think are best? And maybe they wouldn't mind sharing this info with us? Let's go and see, shall we?

DMA DESIGN

The lads from DMA were rather busy when I phoned (working on *Lemmings II* - the next stage in their global domination). However, a pleasant chap called Simon-the-product-manager carried out a quick in-office poll and came up with the following comments from the DMA crew:

Competition Pro = 5 votes.
Kempston Pro = 2 votes

And the also rans were:

"What's a joystick?" (1 vote)
"The one from the *Defender* machine in the office" (3 votes)
"The joystick on the real F-16 fighter plane" (1 vote)

JEFF MINTER

Jeff was thoroughly engrossed in yet more left-field development for the legendary Llamasoft label when I phoned. Still, he was prepared to let a few pearls of wisdom drop in front of this journalistic swine. He had two faves:

"Normally I use a Competition Pro for bog-standard shoot-'em-ups, but recently I have become addicted to the Konix Navigator – this is definitely the *Llamatron* favourite. The ones I hate are those horrible flimsy pilot grip joysticks that snap-off after a short while. I can put up with a multitude of sins from a stick, but it has to last."

PETER MOLYNEUX

Now here's a man with a fine line in either winding up computer hacks or genuinely seeing a side of the computer world unavailable to the rest of us:

"I don't own my favourite joystick, but I saw one in a computer shop in Japan that's a combination joystick and vibrator! That would probably leave even Dominik Diamond speechless! In actual fact I use a Competition Pro-like thing from Suzo. A good stick must be microswitched as well as having a speed-up and slow-down option. The Intruder 5 is my least favourite – it should be on a fightdeck."

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EXTERMINATOR
Cheetah £6.99

A budget stick with something of the look and feel of the 'classic' Atari console job from years ago, this is a no-nonsense effort which will be no use whatsoever to left-handers, on account of having only one base-mounted fire button (as well as one on top of the shaft).

A tall, thin stick with lots of travel (you'll enjoy playing a stick-waggling sports game with this one – *not*), no autofire, a hard square base that makes your left hand ache after five minutes, useless suckers that don't come off (more hand discomfort) and a squidgy, imprecise feel makes it one well worth avoiding. You don't have to spend much more money than this to come home with something a lot more pleasant to use.

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★
Sore hands factor:	★★★★
Overall:	3+2–4 = 1

SUPERSTAR
Quickjoy £13.99

Redeemed! I don't normally like their sticks, but QuickJoy has come through with this one. The SuperStar, although gimmicky with is transparency, has most things (again no throttle control) I could want from a joystick, and it even feels good in my little hands. The suction cups on the bottom of the stick don't work, but that isn't surprising – none of the sticks reviewed here (or ever in the history of the world and space) have suction cups that work. However, the two fire buttons are well placed on a diagonal slant at the front of the base. The autofire slider could have been better placed but it's not unworkable. The stick itself is a metal shaft with a good-sized plastic ball on top for a good grip. Nice one.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★
Overall	4+4–1 = 7

COMPETITION PRO EXTRA
Kempston £17.95

Ah, well, yes. This stick will last and last. Which is a shame, because after using it for a few hours (back to *Kick Off* I'm afraid), my wrist had expanded to the size of Popeye's forearm. This thing is stiffer than a very, *very* stiff thing. The buttons are unresponsive too, and the spongy feel that underlies the stiffness comes as no surprise. That said, a number of other players went up the metaphorical wall when I said that I hated it – they love it! For me, though, old fashioned and likely to cause wrist problems.

Durability (presumed):	★★★★★
Ease of use:	★★★
Sore hands factor:	★★★★
Overall:	5+3–4 = 4

EUROMAX ARCADE
Euromax £24.95

This one takes some getting use to and no mistake. It comes with all the classic problems of joysticks over the years; it has a spongy feel that belies the constant clicks that eminate from its switches. However, it's true this sponginess appeals to many people who like to spend hours with platform games that require a slightly less fluid feel. In terms of durability, the Arcade has a flimsy feel, with a main stick that felt like it could snap off on a quick turn, and it's not particularly cheap. All-in all, a very average buy.

Durability (presumed):	★★★
Ease of use:	★★★★
Sore hands factor:	★★
Overall:	3+4–2 = 5

ARCHER McCLEAN

Archer McClean is still rather pleased with the success of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, which is, of course, played with a mouse. Does that mean he doesn't have much time for joysticks then? Indeed: "To be honest I might write a few games but I rarely play them, so I rarely use sticks. The last one I can remember is a classic Atari one. Very blocky with good tactile feedback and actual clicks to show you that you've made the moves. I've never been one for huge knobbly ones that look like you need to use batteries."

THE BITMAP BROTHERS

The Bros were fighting to get to the phone when I called – probably to call the pizzaman – but Eric Matthews got there first. Most of the Bitmap's offerings require a fair amount of joystick prowess, so Eric's opinion was always going to be important. He told me: "The one we use the most comes via Euromax, I think, and I think it's called the Suzu Arcade. Nice action, nice and simple. The ones I hate, on the other hand, are those that are like aircraft jobbies. There's that clear one with all the orange buttons and stuff. I hate that one."

CONTACT NUMBERS

Euromax: 0262 601006
Suncom: 0453753505
Cheetah: 0222 867777
QuickJoy: 081 365 1993
Kempston: 0234 843355
Powerplay 0457 876601

CONCLUSIONS

It's true that you pays yer money and you takes yer choice – we wouldn't recommend anybody buy a stick without trying it out themselves first – but if you want our choice:

Best under £10: Cheetah 125+
Best hand held: Cheetah Bug
Money no object: Euromax Ultimate
Also worth checking out: the Advanced Gravis range (not reviewed). There *are* Amiga versions of these excellent (but *very* expensive) American sticks available if you shop around a bit.

Work
IN PROGRESS

MEGA MANI A

THE DIARY OF A

Yes, yes, we know you've all been absolutely desperate to find out what's been happening to *Mega lo Mania II* in the last two months (what with the new Top 100 and all we didn't have room for Diary Of A Game last time), but wait no longer – this month, programmer David 'Ubik' Korn gets completely bored with writing graphics and landscaping routines and – yikes! – gets down to the fine and delicate art of actually programming the game itself...

And now, after a short delay, AMIGA POWER, in association with Sensible Software, brings you the latest hot-off-the-grapevine news on the game they're all calling 'not finished'.

The Sensibles: *still* a jolly bunch of chaps.

What's that? You say you don't know what the heck we're on about? Well, it couldn't be simpler, really. Every month this year we're handing a couple of pages over to a top programming dude from top gang of programming dudes Sensible Software (David 'unusual nickname' Korn, to be precise), and letting him take you, the reader, gently by the hand through the incredible amount of drinki– er, really hard work involved in programming a top Amiga game from start to finish.

The game in question is *Mega lo Mania II*, sequel to last year's fabulous 90 percent-rated fun strategy wargame (for want of a better description), and in previous months David's taken us through the construction of the game's landscape creation system and some of the more basic graphical details. Now, though, we begin to get down to the real nitty gritty. And with that, it's over to you, Dave...●

MEGA LO MANIA II – WHAT HAPPENED IN FEBRUARY

Monday 3rd – Friday 7th February

Well, I couldn't put it off any longer. Having toyed with triangles and grabbed at sprites to my heart's content, its finally time to start putting the actual *game* into the game, and about time too.

As the new version is very similar in concept to the original *Mega lo Mania*, and as people have generally said nice things about the menus'n'icons control system we had there, I'm keeping to pretty much the same format. A sensible way to begin (and this *is* Sensible Software after all) is by implementing large chunks of the original game in my system, so I begin the week by reading through Chris Chapman's assembly code for the original – and rarely have I seen such a tangled web of mystery, intrigue and hexadecimal!

Reading through someone else's code (and actually managing to understand it) is a fairly difficult business; they structure it in different ways to your own, and it can be difficult to tell which parts of their program have responsibility for what jobs, and which areas of their data contain what information. Fortunately for me, Chris is just across the room, and I can therefore continually interrupt his work to ask him what's going on in his code. Slowly but surely it begins to make sense.

Next, I copy a few selected bits of his code into my program. First off is the data that represents the different levels and sectors in the game – that's most important, because it gives my code something to play with so that I can tell if it's working. I'll design my own levels for the actual game, of course, but I don't really want to spend lots of time doing that until it's a bit clearer how it'll all turn out.

Monday 10th – Friday 14th

How do you begin a game? At the beginning, of course! And at the beginning of *Mega lo Mania* is the front end menu, where you choose the game options and select which island to play from the epoch. In order to do this, I basically have to get the entire menu system working, and that's no small undertaking.

So how do you write the code for something complex like a menu system? Elementary, my dear teapot – you just use a data structure. What d'you say? 'A what?' Alright then, I'll explain.

Think amount the menus in *Mega lo Mania*. The main elements they're made up of are icons (and I'm including graphics such as the little arrows in that), numbers and text strings. Some of them do things when you click them on, others are just there for decoration and to make the display clearer. Some of them are only there some of the time too – for example, the lightbulb disappears when there's nothing left to invent.

And there's more. When you click on them, some of them lead to other menus altogether; others change from one image to another (such as the sound effects on/off option); the numbers go up and down when you click on them according to which button you use, although some (such as the amounts of elements) can't be edited in that way. And so on.

Given the potentially vast number of combinations, it would require a horrendously complicated piece of code to draw them all, update them when they changed, and decide what to do each time the mouse button gets pressed. And when

1. The front-end menu, as in the first *Mega lo Mania*, choosing an island to play. 2. Choosing the number of men and placing your starting sector. 3. And here we are in the game, with a nice new bit of landscape. 4. The equally unprepared mining menu. There's room for up to four elements, with their icons going down the left-hand side. 5. The raw army menu. 6. Another new bit of landscape, in a new sector, and the factory.

LO
A II
A GAME

you think that a separate routine like this would be needed for each of the many different menus, the complexity and potential for bugs becomes... well, it's the sort of thing that makes programmers wake up screaming in the night.

But wait! What's that, up there in the assembler? Is it a bug? Is it a bit-plane? No, it's data-structure to the rescue!

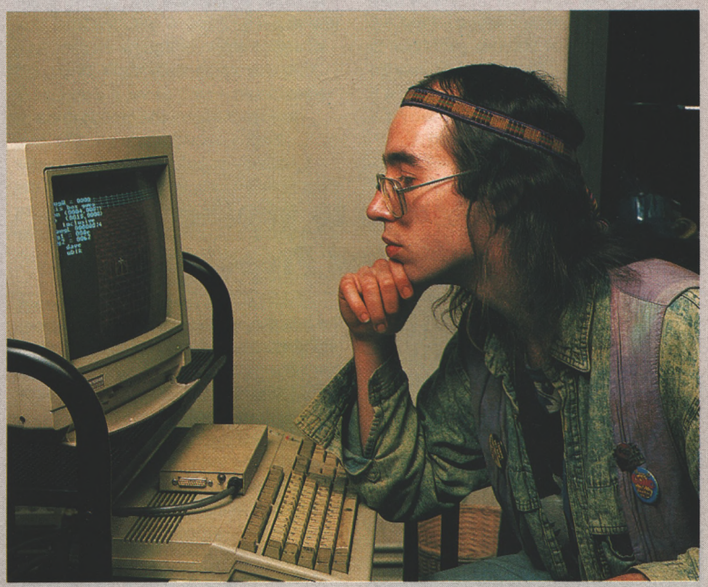
A data structure is a small set of data values that stores all the information about something important in your program. If you write your code so that it correctly reads the data in a data structure, changes and updates it correctly, and displays it suitably on the screen, then you can be sure that your code will also work correctly with any number of them.

So how can this wonderful concept be applied to my menus? Well, I use one data structure for each single item – icon, number, text or whatever – that appears on a menu. The data structure contains all the information about that item: its X,Y position on the screen, the width and height of the area around it in which you must click to select it; whether it's a number, text or graphic icon; whether it should currently be displayed or not; what to do when it is selected (choose a new menu, or call a subroutine); and so on. Each menu is then simply made up of a list of these data structures, one for each item. Then it only takes ones mega-menu-routine to draw them all (or only the ones that have changed since last time), find out if the mouse has been clicked on one of them, and decide what to do about it.

And that's how I spend the week, although I'm sure I'll be finding bugs in it for a while to come. The point is that now I'll only have to fix them once, in my mega-menu routine, rather than all over the place, as would be the case if I'd written a separate routine for each menu.

My joy at having written this terrific piece of program is somewhat dissipated on Thursday when I come across a copy of Commodore Power (no relation to this magazine) and find that their covertape has one of my old C64 games on it – *Arcade Classics* to be precise.

As this is the first I know about it – and they've even had the cheek to claim they own the copyright, and not even mention that I wrote it! – I'm not in a very good mood when I phone them up. They try to fob me off by blaming their duplicator for saying they could have it, but that doesn't excuse them claiming it as their own. As far as I'm concerned they're as bad as the worst kind of pirates – taking someone else's game, mass-duplicating it and selling it.



Guess who? Yes, it's that David 'Ubik' Korn again, *Mega lo Mania II* programmer, unrepentant old hippy, owner of just one set of clothes and now... part-time journalist!

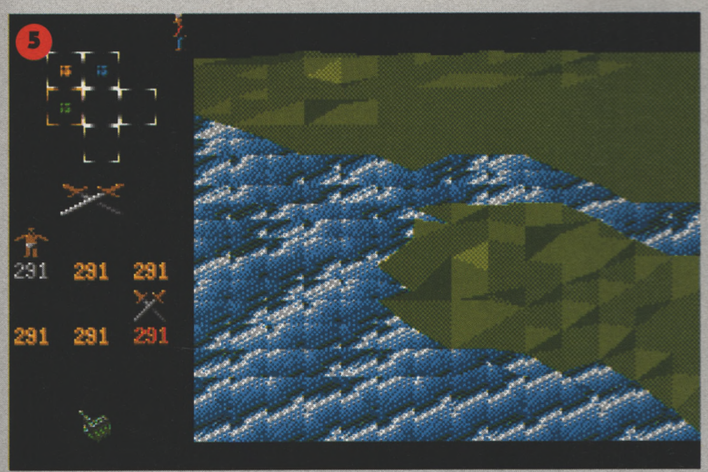
Unfortunately, there's no way I can afford a lawyer to sue them with, and they know that, so to date I've received no apology or payment from them. If you're reading this, lads, I hope you all die soon. Painfully. *(Commodore Power is no more, you'll be pleased to know – Ed.)*

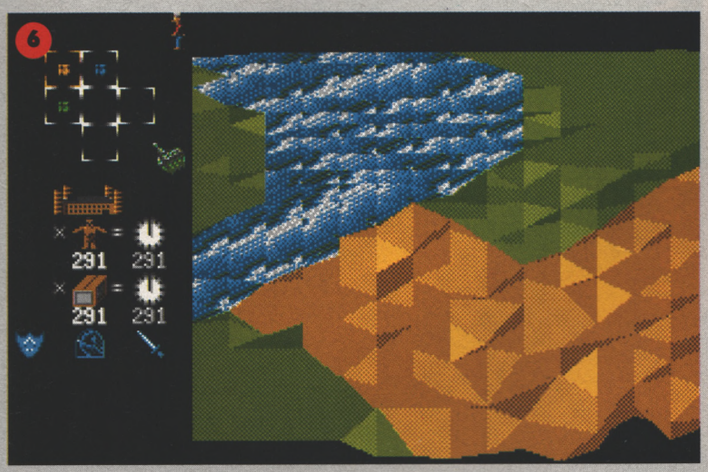
Monday 17th – Friday 21st

I'm feeling a bit hungover on Monday, having been drowning my sorrows all weekend in the pub. Still life, and *Mega lo Mania*, must go on. Thanks to my Super-Mega menu routine, it takes no time at all to get the front end menus working, and I launch myself into the game proper. Since all the weapons need to be invented first, and, of course, all inventions in the game need elements to be built from, I start off with mining options from the main menu. Its not too difficult, and by the end of the week I'm happily clicking on elements, setting men to mining them, and watching the stockpiles mount up. At last, the game is begun. What a feeling of satisfaction!

Monday 24th – Friday 29th

A whole week without *Mega lo Mania*, amazingly enough! John has asked me to write a little demo for AMIGA POWER's issue 13's coverdisk – "It'll only take a couple of days," he says, and so of course I agree to do it. Surprisingly enough, by the end of the week... it's still not finished. Still, never mind – a change is as good as a rest. Seeya' next month, dudes. ●





● Okay, so we've got the game started, but what happens now? Let's hope Ubik remembers that far back in time for next month, eh?

GAME REVIEWS CONTINUED

Hello, and welcome to another month of strategy, sport and French games...

HOT RUBBER

Publisher: Palace Software
Author: Microids
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

You join us here at Silverstone, ready to roll – in half-screen one player mode.

Hot Rubber, eh? That sounds a bit saucy, wouldn't you say? It looks a bit racy from the box, too, what with a luscious leather'n'lace-clad lass straddling a bike and the promise that 'Package includes GIRL ON A MOTORBIKE poster'. (It does, too, and it's currently gracing my wall.)

Sadly, the delightful dollybird is nowhere to be found in the motorbike racing simulation itself. Nor are any decent noises for that matter – the bikes are about as roary-sounding as a baby going 'Bbrrr!' through its lips. In fact, when you first play *Hot Rubber* there's not much fun to be had, full stop. The bike seems to slide across the track for no reason and it's all too easy to fall off. It's right frustrating, I can tell you.

Having said that though, I was just about to dismiss the game and put it back in its box when suddenly, somehow, it all came to me in a flash – the control takes a bit of getting used to, but isn't impossible, that's for sure.

Hot Rubber's not a real motorbike racing simulation, even though it's got plenty of options (such as a practice mode, straight one or two-player racing, a championship, and a selection of four bikes and 16 actual courses) that try to tell you otherwise. It's a pretend one, which is occasionally fun and sometimes funny (the winner shaking a bottle of bubbly before he shoots its contents in yer face is particularly tittery), but is really nothing to get excited about. You can take it or leave it really.

● *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A decidedly average motorbike racing simulation with a reasonable sensation of speed, hit-and-miss playability, and drippy sound. *Super Hang-On*'s still your best bet in this department – and loads cheaper.

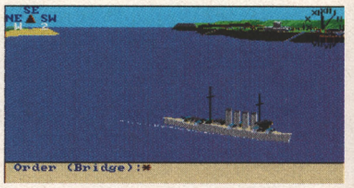
50 PERCENT

DREAD NOUGHTS

Publisher: Turcan Research Systems
Price: £34.95
Release: Out now

Me and Captain Birdseye. We're like that. Which explains why I was so pleased to be presented with a game that combines my two great passions: strategy and naval warfare. Moreover, World War I naval warfare. Terrific, I thought. No – honestly.

If you're familiar with *Austerlitz*, *Waterloo* and Peter Turcan's other wargames, the 3D graphics and text parser used by *Dreadnoughts* will come as no surprise. It's by Dr Turcan too, you see. You're the Admiral of the Fleet, and you order ships around by typing in things like FULL SPEED, ASSIST THE NOTTINGHAM and (straight out of the manual, this one) SIGNAL THE TIGER TO STATION YOUR SHIP 2 MILES OFF THE STARBOARD QUARTER OF THE FLAGSHIP. This requires some pretty spirited typing at times, but the results are generally worth the effort. The game's workings are sophisticated and perfectly balanced, and much more involving than is generally the case with these things.



Hey, we've given Jonathan a game with moving graphics in it. Oops.

Then, of course, there are the graphics. As usual they take ages to draw (but this tends to go unnoticed in the context of the even longer waits while the computer does its thinking). And there are some good explosions and things.

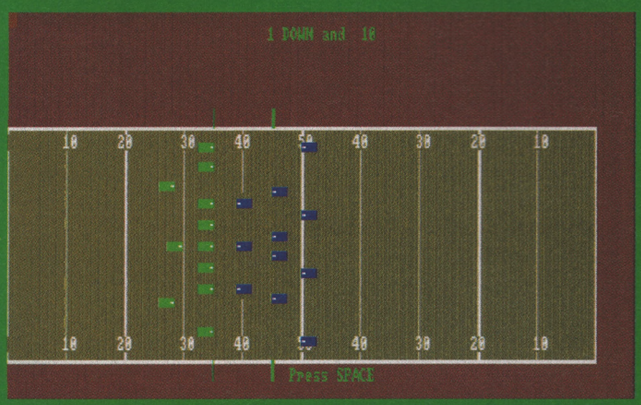
I have to confess to not really having gone a bundle on any of Dr Turcan's previous games. The results simply didn't justify all the waiting around as far as I was concerned, and I quickly got bored with them. So I was quite surprised to find myself actually enjoying *Dreadnoughts*. Enjoying it, mark you. This is largely attributable to the game's accessibility. Although the manual isn't much cop, lacking a step-by-step guide to getting started, the game can basically be left to

AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACH

How do the Monarchs get to their games?

Publisher: Composer Software (Mail Order)
Price: £14.95
Author: Haydn Potter
Release: Out now

This season the London Monarchs blew it, there's no getting around the fact. We all have our theories why – what plays should have been called, when it was wise to chance a sneak on fourth down, when they should have replaced Gelbaugh the quarterback, and so on.



We know we've said before that said graphics aren't everything? Well, um...

Now if you (or, indeed, I) had been in charge... etc etc.

Well, now's your chance to put your money where your mouth is. Not with the real Monarchs, of course, but with Composer Software's *American Football Coach*. Author Haydn Potter's idea is to bring some realism and authenticity to the marketplace – this isn't so much a rival to the graphical gymnastics and animated hands-on action of *John Madden Football* as a complement to it.

The teams pitching gridiron battle here are from the NFL, and calibrated to reflect genuine strengths and weaknesses. EA didn't have the license to use actual teams so they didn't – *American Football Coach* does, and it's my guess that small-time Composer Software just figure on getting away with it. Good luck to them, though it has to be said they haven't made the most of their gamble. Even though the real names have been kept to protect the authenticity, the depth to which each character has been evaluated and tailored is limited to a mark out of ten, and then it's only the principle players who get an individual evaluation. *Madden* offered more.

The point here is, how can a coaching sim claim to offer greater team accuracy if the building blocks on which its calculations are based (namely an inadequate player rating system) are so limited?

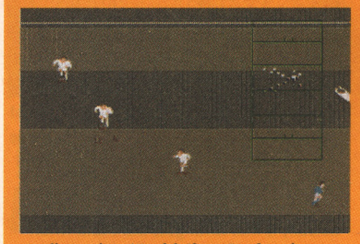
American Football Coach doesn't even make up for this lack of sophistication in the repertoire of plays open to the budding Larry Kennan. With only a handful of passing plays (based on short, medium or long target objectives), a few fairly inventive but randomly-guided running plays and a basic defensive play book, you're inevitably led to the conclusion that the only thing with great depth to be found here is the hole into which standards seem to have been dropped.

So how does the game actually play? Well, at the start you choose

It's back, and – yes! – it's much better.

WORLD CLASS RUGBY – THE FIVE NATIONS EDITION

Publisher: Audiogenic
Author: Denton Designs
Price: £29.99
Release Date: Out now



Audiogenic's *World Class Rugby* – it may look pretty much the same, but you can just feel the difference.

For those of you who didn't see the January edition of AMIGA POWER, this game is quite familiar to me. You see it was released in an earlier incarnation, called simply *World Class Rugby*. In my original review I found the game tricky to control and with a few playability problems. And now here I am again with the new version and yes, it's much better. Indeed, it's now at least as good as its only real rival, Domark's *Rugby: The World Cup*. As well as being very playable in either two player or computer opponent mode, it has one over Domark's version through its realism (something I'll get to in a minute).

The main selling point of this new version is, of course, the Five Nations Championship – you can now play as either England, France, Ireland, Scotland or Wales in a bid to win the Grand Slam. Without going into too many details, the scenario is handled well, and with the World Cup mode still available as an option, adds scope to the game. Whichever mode you pick, the game's a joy to play – much easier to control than the original version and, with its atmospheric sound effects and well crafted animation, a joy to play. Don't fret about the 30 quid price tag – if you like rugby in any shape or form then I'm sure that you'll find it's money well spent.

The rest of the game is much the same as before. There are oodles of conditions and options (normal or muddy conditions, individual skills levels, match times, rules, types of replay, whatever) as before, but this time the controllability is now excellent, the simpler controls making for a much more playable and enjoyable game than the original.

In fact, there's only one big downside – there aren't enough scrums. Instead there are rucks (for those not familiar with the term, this is a kind of human pile up on the rugger field where the ball must be won with the feet) – slightly unrealistic, though at least they provide opportunity for players to be sent off (good fun when it's one of the opposition, a pain when it's your own guy).

A great game then, and fine competition for Domark's rugby bash. If you like rugby, and you haven't bought the first version of this game, well worth a punt.

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Great improvements to the controllability and playability make this new version a stunning rugby game. Strongly recommended.
86 PERCENT

its own devices to start off with. In the absence of orders from you, your fleet will take the initiative and fight battles of its own accord. Then, as your confidence builds up, you can begin to 'take the com' and throw in a few ideas of your own. (This is how all wargames should be – I get fed up of repeatedly having to issue trivial orders to every unit on the map just to prevent them from sitting there looking dumb.)

Dreadnoughts is a really smashing wargame, and I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone who enjoys sitting in darkened rooms waiting for their next movement phase to come around. I simply couldn't find fault with it (other than the lack of speed, the price and the fact that it's a naval strategy game).

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Fun to play (relatively speaking, of course) and a genuine step forward for the genre. Just needs speeding up a bit.
80 PERCENT

which team you're going to coach and which to play against, in either a playoff or league game. It's then straight into first down and you chose your play.

It's 'I dunno, that sounds quite fun' time now, as you hazard a wild guess on which one to attempt – the only hard facts you have to go on are the player stats (marks out of ten remember – you get more detailed appraisals for nature table submissions at primary school) which give you an idea of which receiver is likely to catch the ball and which running back is the quickest. Apart from that, you're on your own. (Of course, some plays work better than others. But by the time you've worked out which, the players involved are so knackered out so you can't use them any more. Brill-a-roony.)

The graphical sequence illustrating the ensuing fiasco is pathetic too. It's impossible to work out what the hell the ball is doing (it appears that the quarterbacks have mastered 360 banana shots to perfection – I think) and with no control over the action, it's very difficult to work out why a play has succeeded or failed.

If *John Madden* hadn't backed up its excellent graphics and playability with some decent raw game logic, then *American Football Coach* may have at least identified a gap in the market for a dedicated American football coaching sim.

The problem for this game is that *Madden did* have the trousers to go with the mouth, and *American Football Coach* couldn't come up with the necessary pantaloons even if *Madden* had failed. And, taking that feeble trouser/leg metaphor at its natural conclusion, all it remains for me to say is that this is a pile of old cobblers.

● *NEIL WEST*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A feeble attempt to fill a gap in the market that simply isn't there. With a stat-intensive sport such as American Football, using genuine NFL teams with real players and then coming up with a game as poor as this is like discovering Eldorado and leaving with nothing but the commemorative T-shirt.
21 PERCENT

SAMURAI: THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Publisher: Impressions
Price: £29.99
Authors: Edward Grabowski/Erik Casey
Release: Out now

One of the fetching stills from *Samurai*. One day all wargames will look nice.

As you should all know by now, 30 or 40 computer game incarnations down the line, the samurai were the guards of the great shoguns in feudal Japan. We're also 30 or 40 down the line as far as Impressions wargames are concerned, making it only a matter of time before these two great lines in computer-gaming would eventually cross. And now, inevitably, they have. Set in 16th century Japan, *Samurai: Way Of The Warrior* sees you in the role of a shogun chap called Usaka San, caught up in the middle of a power struggle with a chap called Obinaka, who killed your father and stole his land. Now, as they say, it's a matter of honour...

Well, I don't know about this honour business, but I do know that this is a wargame, and as wargames go it's par for the course. Disk accessing is occasionally a bit of a pain, although at least hard drive users are catered for. The game starts with you in control of five cities (Obinaka controls the other five) and allocates you a certain amount of money to spend on creating your armies. Once done, it's off to war. Spread out over the map are the ten cities – you must capture all your enemies by sending your armies (one square at a time) across to meet the opposition. This, it has to be said, takes an awfully long time, as the game is based on a turn by turn system.

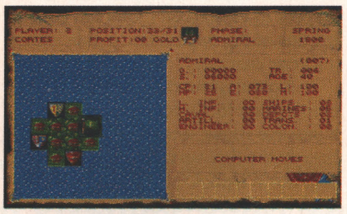
The graphics are nicely drawn – at least to begin with. The intro has a slideshow of a samurai putting his togs on from next to nothing right up to full battle dress. It's not bad, so I expected fine things (or, at least, finer things than you expect in a wargame) from the actual battle sequences. Sadly, I was disappointed. Whenever two armies meet, a sub-game pops up with the armies at opposite ends of the screen – you have to scroll the screen to see them both. The sprites are big and blocky and move appallingly slowly but then again, this IS a wargame. The sound on the other hand is a bit better, with a Japanese style tune and some good sampled speech. Not awful by the standards of the genre then, but equally, it's a long way off from anything you could really term 'jolly good.' Even the most battle-hardened wargamer won't get anything new from this.

● *ADIE PRICE*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Alright in the sound, graphics and general presentation departments, but in this kind of thing the game is everything, and here it isn't up to much at all. Buy only if you're really desperate for a wargame fix.
55 PERCENT

SPOILS OF WAR

Publisher: Out now
Price: £29.99
Authors: Internecine
Release: Out now



Look, we don't have a vendetta against wargames (honest), but just *look* at it...

The only complimentary thing I can thing of to say about this one is "nice idea". You're presented with an unexplored, virgin world, and orders from the king to colonise it. Other players are trying to do the same, and conflict is inevitable.

Sounds like fun? Well it's not. It's crap. Look at the screen shot: on the left is a blocky, indecipherable wargame-style map, and on the right is a list of letters and numbers. In a nutshell, that's the game.

Instructions are issued by fumbling through a series of chronically disorganised menus. There's no clear way of knowing what you can click on and what you can't, and a simple operation like moving around involves decending through two levels of menus before being able to click on the square you want to move to. What's the point? Why couldn't I just click on it to start off with? And I do wish it would stop throwing numbers at me. If I wanted to know many men, coins, action points (etc) a certain general had I'd tell it so. I don't want it all displayed on-screen the whole time when the space could be used for sorting out menus.

What we've got, basically, is a run of the mill god-sim that lacks a nice 3D graphical front end, leaving the horrendously mathematical innards exposed for all to see. The manual informs us, for example, that ships sail at '(wind velocity + 1) x sail x rigging'. I don't wish to know that.

Even if you don't mind all that sort of thing, and are happy to reject years of graphical advancement for the sake of squeezing in as many numbers and equations as possible, the fact remains that it's boring – extremely boring – and I'm never going to play it again. Ever.

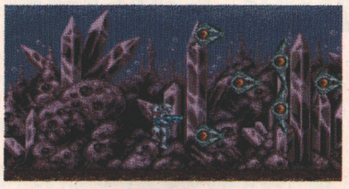
● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Yuck. An unplayable muddle of numbers. Not even the good(ish) sound effects can hope to save it.

45 PERCENT

STARUSH

Publisher: Ubi Soft
Price: £25.99
Authors: In house
Release: Out now



***Starush* – a few interesting ideas in here, but even so, what you see is what you get.**

Fascinating Grammatical Observations, No 655: the phrase 'Worthy but dull'. Doesn't the fact that something's dull automatically exclude it from having any real value? After all, who'd want to fork out £26 for something that was dull, no matter how many redeeming qualities it had (say, for example, all the money was being donated straight to Greenpeace or something)? Eh?

The reason I ask is that the phrase 'worthy but dull' was the one that kept forcing itself persistently into my mind as I played this horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up. It's pretty for a start, the plot's a bit more interesting than usual, there's a neat intro sequence and you can play any of the four worlds (each with three levels, the whole thing representing some evil other-dimensional sign-of-the-zodiac monsters) from the opening menu. The gameplay has some nice ideas too – instead of having a certain number of lives, each time you get hit by a bullet or enemy, you change to a lower form (from a spaceship to a guy with a jetpack to a guy simply running along the ground and jumping up, for example), each of which has different characteristics (eg the soldier on the ground can't reach the higher-up baddies and he's got fairly nobby armaments, but he's smaller and harder to hit) and calls for different gameplay strategies. Of course, you can also collect power-ups which reverse the process (as well as the usual short-lived extra weaponry), building your character up to more controllable and powerful incarnations, but usually these also make you bigger and an easier target for the aliens.

Another interesting idea is that each level comes in two sections – the first scrolls from right to left, ending in what's actually a mid-level guardian, and when that's defeated you scroll back in the opposite direction against new enemies until you get to the real end-of-level boss who appears at your starting position. This might seem pointless and cosmetic, but there's actually a completely different feel to the scrolling-the-wrong-way bit which adds more to the gameplay's variation than you might think.

Pretty damn worthy stuff so far, then, but sadly *Starush* falls down completely by failing to attach an interesting game to all

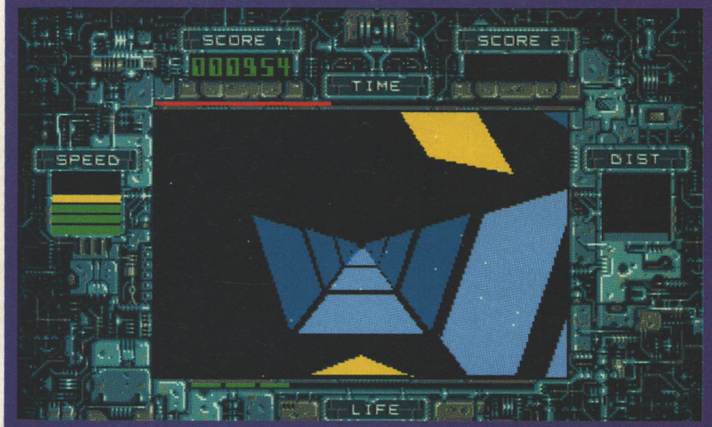
Wild, though not quite wonderful, Loriciel continue their policy of weirdness.

PSYBORG

Publisher: Loriciel
Authors: Fabrice Decroix (conception, coding), Sandrine Paul (conception) & many more
Price: £26.99
Release: Out now

Oh you French, you are so amusing. Your countryside is beautiful. Your wine, women and song are quite nice too. But your names and your software... Your names and your software are oh, so silly (but often entertaining with it).

This one's a case in point –



WHEEEEEE! Speeding down a twisty, turny tunnel in space can be terrific fun. Note the useless overgrown panel surround though – the play area ain't all that big.

stupid storyline (it's so rubbish I'm not going to recount it) masking a rather silly game. At first the idea seems like nothing special (rather reminiscent of *STUN Runner* in fact) – speed down increasingly twisty, turny and lengthy polygon tunnels in space as quickly as possible in an effort to earn points. And win.

The tunnels actually form bridges between planets – well, planets and their moons – to create a level structure. You basically race from one moon to the next (there are usually three or four), collecting a password from each one so you don't have to replay from the very beginning, until the planet itself is reached and subsequently 'cleansed' (don't ask). You then move on to the next 'system'.

En route there are coloured shapes to pick up for special features. There are 'Winking Red' 'T' Shapes for Extra Time, 'Winking Yellow' Diamond Shapes for Bonus Points, Green Triangles for Extra Lives, Green Diamonds for Speed Up, Red Diamonds for Slow Down, 'Winking Red' Triangles for Teleportation, Red Squares for Spring-Board... you get the idea. The Bonus Points collected are traded in shops for lives, time and temporary invulnerability.

So that's *Psyborg* pretty much in a nutshell. The reasons for it being as ploppy as it actually is are as follows: For a start, the 'courses' are poorly designed and don't allow the player to settle in (the player's penalised heavily for his mistakes, too). The colour scheme could be better for the course too, as the special features aren't always as obvious as they could be.

Secondly, the password business is pointless. If the product was sensibly designed in the first place, passwords wouldn't be necessary. Skillful play should be enough to see you through.

Thirdly, you get killed often and find you have to sit through a dull intro sequence before you can get back into the game – a true will-sapper if ever there was one.

It's true that once you overcome the initial frustration, begin to learn the layouts and get your speed up, the adrenalin flows and it all feels remarkably satisfying, but it's still gameplay on a very simple level. Even if *Psyborg* had been done properly it really should be budget-priced – at this cost it'll only gather the smallest audience of surreal-sensation seekers, and that's really all it deserves.

● *GARY PENN*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Erm... interesting. It's a flawed but shallowly playable variation on the racing theme. Worth a look.

65 PERCENT

these neat features. The play area is only about four times the height of your character and the alien attacks are unimaginative and repetitive, and in play the thing's actually deadly boring. For all the groovy bits, this is a lifeless game, and while you couldn't exactly say you were ripped off if you bought it, you'd be pretty unlikely ever to load it up for fun.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Yep, 'worthy but dull' seems to sum it up pretty perfectly. There's the start of something good in here, but there's far too much missing.
64 PERCENT

THE MANAGER

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £25.99
Authors: Software 2000
Release: Out now

***The Manager* – not as fun as Hale & Pace.**

In the unlikely event of anyone ever ploughing through the entirety of this game's tragically-written, impossibly long and muddled manual, that person will find that *The Manager* is a football management sim (surprise!) with, well, pretty much everything you'd expect a football management sim to contain these days. In other words you've got oodles of competitions, oceans of statistics, endless financial juggling and lots and lots (and lots) of menu screens.

Unfortunately, none of these have any words on them, with almost the entire game being played out via a series of immensely unhelpful icons. (And where there are words, the game seems to ignore them. When a menu asking if you want to watch a 'spectacular' European Cup draw crops up, for example – and it's only spectacular if you're impressed by small boxes with the names of football teams in them drifting up the screen one at a time to form a fixture list – you can click away quite happily on the 'No Way!' icon, only to have the screen clear and the exact same question come up again. The third time round it usually gets the message, but you'll be asleep by then).

When you eventually manage to negotiate your way into an actual match, it's slightly more impressive. True, most of the time you get to watch little more than an almost totally black screen with some numbers counting up, but occasionally that's interrupted by what's in fact a pretty nifty animated highlights section – spoiled only by the fact that your team seems to shoot the same way in each half of the game! Even more bizarre, though, is the fact that the two teams seem to swap strips too! In effect this makes it impossible to tell which lot are actually yours at any given time – at least until one of them gets a goal and the scoreboard changes. No, I didn't understand it either...

So where does that leave us? Well, the bitter truth is that it's been a long time since a football management game has proved to be a worthy full-pricer, and nothing's been changed by this effort. If you really force yourself you can get the hang of the icons and play the game properly, but all you'll find when you do is a game so bog-standard and bereft of imagination that you'll bitterly regret every wasted second of effort. Awful.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Tedious and confusing. Excellent highlights sequence raises the tone a bit, but this is a game for illiterate social inadequates only. The anti-icons campaign starts here.
36 PERCENT

UTOPIA: THE NEW WORLDS

Publisher: Gremlin
Price: £14.99
Authors: Graham Ing
Release: Out now

***Utopia* – lots of brave new worlds.**

Oh good, a data disk. The real test of a reviewer's mettle is the data disk, because there's absolutely nothing to say about them that wasn't said about the original game – they are, almost without exception, simply an extension of the original game rather than an improvement or a correction of any flaws which might have been present, and as such reviewing them is a bit of a dubious activity. Why? Because the only people reading the review are the people who already have the game and are interested in the data disk. There now follows, for our more trainspottery readers, the only slightly relevant piece of information in the whole review – The New Worlds contains 10 – that's 10 – new, er, worlds. Thank you.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Look, it's a bloody data disk for flip's sake. Why on Earth are you bothering to read this at all? You already know if you want it or not. Go away.
60 PERCENT

The last in the series (we hope).

POOLS OF DARKNESS

Hey, what's that sound? Oh, it must *Legend* quaking in it's boots – *not!*

Publisher: SSI/US Gold
Price: £30.99
Author: Strategic Simulations Inc
Release: Out now

That Tolkien has got a lot to answer for. I don't know about you, but every time I force myself to load up the latest dull, unimaginative, written-by-numbers FRP I despair – there are just too many of them, and too few of them do anything new with the type. The sorry fact is that these Advanced Dungeons And Dragons things (the *Eye Of The Beholder* series aside) are amongst the worst offenders too – they've got the name and the official licence and the real D&D rules, and that's enough to ensure that people will still buy these, despite the fact that they're amongst the sloppiest around.

This one's a case in point. Look up dull in the OED and you almost expect the definition to tell you to check out computer role playing. When it's done well – as in *Legend* or *Eye Of The Beholder 2*, also reviewed this issue – it's great, but the rest of the time, oh dear. Let's take a closer look at some of the elements that make this so boring.

1) The plot is so thin it makes Lena Zavaroni look like Mike McShane. A band of heroes (who you can create afresh, import from previous AD&D games or use the ones supplied with the program) arrive in the city of Phlan, where their adventures began all those prequels ago, to find that the evil Lord Blane is trying to spread his wicked influence. This time he has the use of 'Pools' that let him jump around dimensions. You have to stop him taking control of, well, everywhere. There are a host of new monsters to meet, and allies to seek out, and that's about it. Original or what? (Hint: it's 'Or what'.)

2) The graphics display can give four views: area, which is like an overhead map; 3D (used in the *very* loosest form of the term), which gives you a very rough view of what your characters can see immediately in front; 'lavish' artistic impressions of non-player characters, places and events; and combat view, for when you indulge in a bit of rough and tumble. All are bog standard at best; at worst they are as confusing as hell.

3) Combat often looks a complete mess – I defy anyone to be able to work out what's happening. Aside from the appalling graphics, the information about who hit who and inflicted what damage flashes up so quickly it's unreadable.

4) You have to keep referring to the manual all the time. This is a pet hate of mine – it totally destroys the game's atmosphere.

5) The game is controlled through a series of menus, sub-menus and sub-sub-menus. It's all pretty cumbersome and time consuming, and not very intuitive.

6) One of the most annoying omissions of the game, however, is that you can't talk to other characters. When you meet one of them they might tell you something interesting, but you can't actually engage in a proper conversation with them, which goes completely against the spirit of role playing.

The basic point, then, is that this is a dull game, made almost completely worthless buy the fact that there are so many similar RPGs around, and a good number of them are much, much better.

● *DAVE GOLDER*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Slow takes on a new definition – a next-to-useless bog-standard RPG. Could put newcomers off for life.
22 PERCENT

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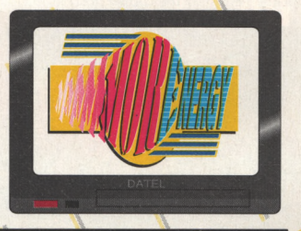
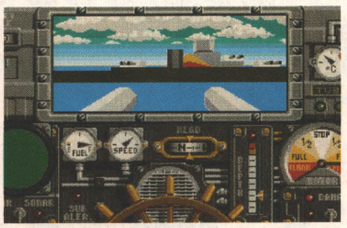


BUDGET

We've got another packed programme for you this month, with the usual batch of compilations, re-releases and original budgets, plus – plus! – a new batch of £2.99 Amiga re-releases for cheapskates from Prism Software.

ADVANCED DESTROYER SIMULATOR

Publisher: Action 16
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now



Land ho! Yes, once again it's awful-at-full-price-but-not-quite-so-bad-at-under-a-tenner budgie re-release time.

"Good Luck!" heartily encourages the instruction manual of *Advanced Destroyer Simulator* on its final page. Of course, exactly what is means by this is open to discussion. Perhaps it is wishing you 'Good Luck' for ploughing through the instructions, although (assuming that you'd naturally read the last page first) little good luck is really necessary. Delightedly, the flimsy ten pages of instructions highlight just enough to get you going; you have been set a number of missions during World War II, all of which involve mastering one of the Royal Navy's Destroyers on a mission to take out non-allied ships within three different settings (The Mediterranean, The English Channel, and the Norwegian Fjords).

Possibly the instructions are wishing you 'Good Luck' in getting to grips with the game itself. Unlikely – controls of the ship have been restricted to the joystick for moving, and a few keys for cannons, torpedoes, binoculars, maps and damage reports. For an advanced destroyer simulator, it's not excactly overly advanced.

Don't expect to have to spend hours before you really know what you're doing either – training missions are available to get you into both the mood and the swing of things.

However, what you may not have so much luck with is actually enjoying yourself. Burning around, shooting baddy ships and burning home again is essentially all that you have to do, and without *Armour-Geddon*'s vehicles to pilot, without *Hunter*'s graphics and without the speed and excitement of most flight sims, *Advanced Destroyer Simulator* seems a decidedly limp re-release indeed.

● *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Lacking action and depth, this is one 'boat' sim that just never really gets off the ground. Even at £7.99, it's not really worth wasting time with.

48 PERCENT

GOLDEN AXE

Publisher: Tronix
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Before we start, I have to admit to being in something of a minority (ie of one) in the office about this one. But then, what's new? A massive game from a couple of years back (it got to number two in the Christmas chart when originally released), *Golden Axe* is a much-feted conversion of the popular Sega arcade beat-'em-up. Indeed, it won the 'Best 16-bit coin-op conversion' title at something called the Golden Joystick awards in 1991. So why does it bore me to tears?

Well, the loading system's certainly got something to do with it (the disk accesses at several points in each level, the action simply stopping in mid-flow, *Shadow Of The Beast* style), but more wearing is the game itself. *Golden Axe* boasts an entirely laudable 'context-sensitive' control mode, which basically means that when you press the fire button, your character executes one of a number of different fighting moves depending on the circumstances at that particular moment. While this is a good way of compressing the more complicated controls of the coin-op, it reduces the gameplay to a simple matter of walking along for a bit until you come across a couple of baddies, going up to them and hammering away repeatedly on the fire button until one of you falls over (this seems to be decided in a largely arbitrary

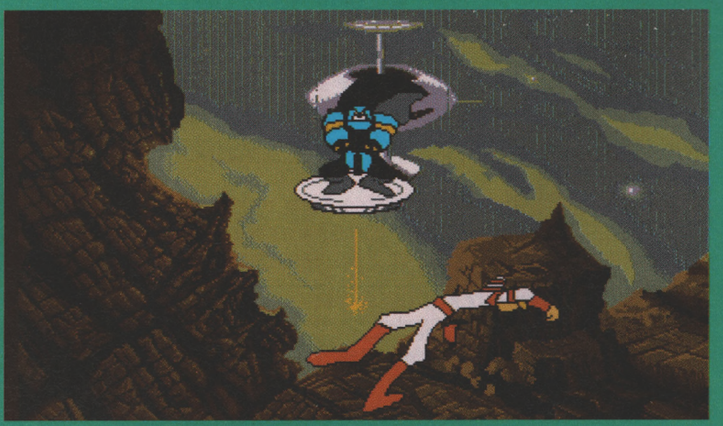
***Golden Axe* – so good nine out of 10 AMIGA POWER reviewers prefer it. (Stuart, sadly for Tronix, isn't one of them.)**

AWARD WINNERS

Publisher: Empire
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Y'know, if I had 10p for every multi-game re-release set we've reviewed that called itself 'The ultimate collection', 'The definitive compilation', 'The superlative anthology' *(Raid that thesaurus! – Ed.)* or whatever, I'd have at least 20p by now. What I wouldn't have is anything like enough money to go out and buy this one, so let's see whether it's actually worth blowing half my month's wages on.

***Populous* – a jewel in the rather muddied crown of Empire's *Award Winners*.**



***Space Ace* – the kind of title which gets put on compilations simply because it looks good in the pics on the back of the box. Of course, some folk know how crap it really is.**

First off comes *Kick Off 2*. I think we've made it pretty clear where we (and particularly, I) stand on this one by now, so I won't waste any more words on it. If you like it, you like it, and good luck. My score – 23 percent.

Next there's *Space Ace*. This game's sequel scored an impressive 17 percent in issue 10, but the earlier version simply isn't up to that high standard. Action takes place in about four short sequences, all featuring the well-documented lack of gameplay inherent in these conversions of laser-disk coin-ops. The animation in *Space Ace* is probably the least impressive of any of the Don Bluth games so far, too, so today's score for *Space Ace* is 12 percent.

Then we get to *Pipe Mania*. A hugely popular game with all the critics when it was released back in 1989, I never really saw the appeal of it myself. Sluggish and irritating to play, you never get to feel properly in control of the 'puzzle' action, and it lacks the build-it-up-then-clear-it-away addictive hook of *Tetris* or *Loopz*.

Still, it's easy to pick up and the whole family can enjoy the original and non-violent gameplay, so let's be generous and give *Pipe Mania* a 1992

manner), then walking on a little bit further and doing it all over again against a slightly different backdrop. The scrolling seems to work more or less at random too, so that in level two (for example), you can be faced with a broken bridge which you must leap over, only to find that the scrolling won't move enough to let you reach the other side, causing you to plummet through the gap to your death.

Even without irritating quirks like this one, *Golden Axe* is a game which requires almost no actual skill to play whatsoever (the ability to hit fire a lot is all you really need), and after half an hour of it, I'd had more than enough. Great stuff for undemanding nine-year-olds, though.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Horrifically tedious trudger with pretty graphics and nob-all else. Certainly nothing you could actually call 'gameplay', anyway. I'm pretty certain that the rest of the office would give this in the seventies (at least) at budget price, but me...

35 PERCENT

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This coin-op shoot-'em-up conversion was one of my favourite ST and Spectrum games ever, but until now I'd never actually played the Amiga versions, which boast the arcade's simultaneous two-player mode and scrolling instead of flick-screen action. This is a very faithful interpretation of the coin-op, but with that game's slightly unwieldy 'rotating-joystick' fire control replaced with a less sophisticated but more usable system.

The game itself features nine varied levels, packed with a wide range of baddies (from cannon-fodder footsoldiers to enormous warships bristling with gun emplacements which make up a whole level by themselves), with appreciably different game skills needed to get through each one. The varying weapons you can buy from the power-up shops between each level add an element of strategy more pronounced than you might think at first, with some levels a lot easier if you select the less obvious add-ons, and the whole thing exhibits a level of atmosphere (crawling through narrow tunnels, blasting squadrons of huge jets against a beautiful sunset, battling tanks on a rickety bridge across a series of waterfalls, ducking under lethal clusters of buzzsaws and climbing precariously up ladders against the face of a massive lava flow) rarely seen in this kind of straightforward arcade zapper.

***Midnight Resistance* in 'top-value-only-£7.99- what-a-barg-most-excellent-review' shock!**

Oddly enough, the scrolling loses the welcome element of well-judged suspense that was present in the flick screen versions, and the two-player mode doesn't work all that well (it slows the pace somewhat, not for technical reasons but simply because one player is always holding up the scrolling for the other one), but minor moans aside, this is one of the grooviest slices of arcade action you could ask for at this price. Don't try to resist...

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Surprisingly, less fun than the ST and Speccy versions, but then that's hardly relevant, is it? Great arcade blasting fun , and probably one of The Hit Squad's best.

84 PERCENT

HOVER SPRINT

Publisher: Codemasters
Price: £9.99
Release date: Out now

Hover Sprint is the latest budget release from the Codies. And, as is often the case with Codies games, what you get is exactly what the title says – a hovercraft race simulation.

It's solid filled 3D too, and comes on a couple of disks – exactly the sort of product that two years ago would have been bound to come with a full price sticker on it.

***Hover Sprint* – *Hard Drivin'* crossed with *Powerdrome* crossed with, oh, I dunno.**

Sounds interesting, you might think. Well, yes. While it's not up to the likes of *Vroom* and *Formula One Grand Prix* of course – you could hardly expect it to be – it does manage to be comparable with the likes of *Hard Drivin'* or *Powerdrome*, no mean feat. In fact, imagine the futuristic setting of *Powerdrome* added to the basic *Hard Drivin'* gameplay and you'll have a pretty good idea of what we're talking about here. (We'll leave the fact it's not as good as either aside for the moment.)

Despite the sophisticated look, what happens in the game is simple. You select the type of (hover)craft you want to race – and there are a good number of designs to choose from. You pick automatic or manual gears, depending on which racing craft you select. You practice a circuit or go to the race menu and select from a number of different race tracks. You pick how many laps you want to race, or if you want to try out against a chum (through a serial link). And you race.

Unfortunately this is where all the good intentions become a bit unstuck. Once you're actually playing it the game proves to be tedious, slow and lacking in any real feeling of speed – this is one of those games that looks a lot better in the screenshots than actually moving.

It's also fairly uncontrollable – more a giant dodgem event than anything else, but one made all the more frustrating by the waiting around to be allowed to restart every time you get bumped off the track.

All in all then, more of an interesting development – solid 3D used for original budget games – than a worthwhile release. It'll be interesting to see if and how this trend for more and more sophisticated budgies develops, but in the meantime you're better off sticking with similar re-releases.

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's more bovver racing a hover! Interesting concept – and ambitious for a budgie – but really very so-so.

48 PERCENT

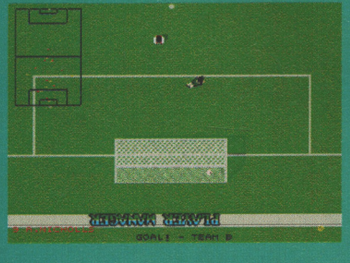
mark of 60 percent.

And finally, *Populous*. Also hugely popular with the critics, also a bit of a mystery to me, but undeniably original and engaging, and a god game which gives you a feel of omnipotence unrivalled since the days of *Little Computer People*.

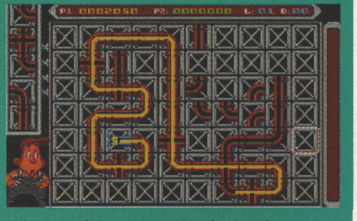
To be honest, most of us find this over-complicated to play and pretty repetitive once you do get into it, but the Ed loves it to bits so for the sake of balance we'll give it a whopping great score of 72 percent.

Overall? Time to get the calculator out...

● *STUART CAMPBELL*



***Kick Off 2* – another over-rated title gets relegated to the compilation division.**



***Pipe Mania* – once a classic, but it's showing its age a bit.**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Dodgy grouping of big-name so-called 'classics' of which only *Populous* is really any good (and I don't even like that very much, personally). For only two quid more you could make your own compilation out of *Rainbow Islands*, *Scooby And Scrappy*, *Head Over Heels*, *Midnight Resistance*, *Future Basketball*, *Escape From The Planet Of The Robot Monsters* etc (substitute your own favourite budgies here) instead, and that's what I recommend you do.

42 PERCENT

APACHE FLIGHT

Publisher: Atlantis
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

***Apache Flight* – another budget label decides to *SWIV*-el it, just a little bit.**

It's Amiga budget *SWIV*-alike time again, with what seems like the millionth 'fly heavily-armed helicopter across desert landscape shooting other helicopters and tanks and really exciting stuff like that' game we've seen in the last six months.

This one's, um, got bigger graphics than most, with pleasingly chunky choppers (yes, yes, we know) and so on, gliding around the screen in a smooth but lethargic manner, which inconveniently leaves very little space for manoeuvering in or any of that sort of clever tricksy stuff. The most innovative feature of the game is the series of refuelling points you have to fly over (which also contain power-ups if you choose to blast them instead), but apart from that we're in depressingly generic territory.

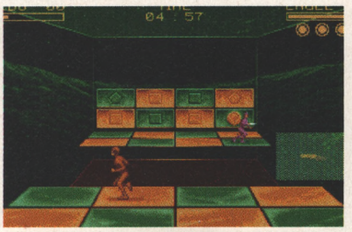
Code Masters' *Sky High Stuntman* did almost exactly the same things as this game but 20 times better, and if you're really after some low-priced blasting action, that's the one to go for. *Apache Flight* is sluggish and uneventful, and I doubt if you'll want to play it more than twice. So, er, unless four quid a go sounds like your kind of bargain...

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
You've seen this before so many times you could probably write the game yourselves in your sleep. Technically alright but dull, dull, dull.
47 PERCENT

DISC

Publisher: Action 16
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now



What a waste of a decent movie idea. Yep, *Disc* is actually heavily inspired by a sequence in eighties sci-fi 'classic' Tron. Shame, but the vid is probably more fun.

A simple enough game in itself, but *Disc* suffers heavily from what I have come to term as the 'Physics Question' syndrome. Imagine you're in an exam – you open up the question booklet and an unnerving confusion of numbers, diagrams and sentences grin up at you, whilst you gape down in complete bewilderment. But actually start, and hey, it's not as unforgivingly impossible as you first thought. In fact,five minutes later it's all become pretty simple...

Open up the instruction booklet to this game, then, and an unnerving confusion of numbers, diagrams and sentences grin up at you, whilst you gape down in complete bewilderment. But load up the game and – hey! – it really isn't as unforgivingly impossible as you thought.

What the instructions had made out to be the most complicated sport ever has turned out as nothing more than a game of, er, Frisbee. Admittedly there's a bit more to it; you see things from a *Pong*-style view, and the idea is to remove as many blocks of floor and background behind your opponent as it takes to force him to fall into the deep recesses of space, before he does the same to you.

A few more rules exist with reference to bonuses, hits required to remove the blocks and who has possession of the Frisbee, whilst the decision to play against the computer, a friend or in a tournament must be made too.

It's a simple enough idea all in all, with few faults technically, yet for reasons that cannot be explained it is just no fun to play. Whereas *Speedball* took the already enjoyable aspects of a football or basketball game and twisted them into an interesting future sport, *Disc* has taken the crap idea of a Frisbee game (and the dated feel of a *Pong*) and twisted them into a hopeless one. Sad, really.

● *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE
A boring old *Pong*/Frisbee/*Discs Of Tron* variant that doesn't pick you up by the squishies and shake you up and down (as any decent sports sim should).
42 PERCENT

SPY VS SPY

Publisher: Wicked/EDOS
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This one's been around for ages, but it's had a new lease of life courtesy of EDOS (see Do The Write Thing), so we thought we'd give it a quick going-over anyway. It's a no-nonsense, no-frills port of the ancient 8-bit versions of the MAD magazine cartoon licence, but that's no bad thing, because the 8-bit game was one of the funniest and most compulsive two-player games ever invented. The action takes

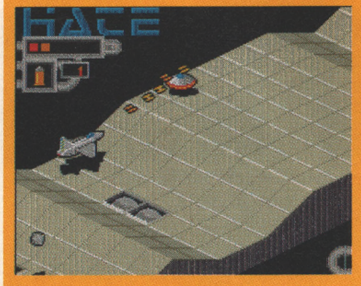
PRISM GAMES

After a resounding 'Phew' from the software industry, Prism unearth their second batch of re-releases available to you, the reader, for little less than price of a Big Mac, chips and a medium sized milkshake (chocolate flavour), and less still than a four pack of Toilet Duck.

Rich Pelley was up to his eyebrows in A Level revision this month, so who better to give all 12 new games the once over treatment, we thought? (Unfortunately he only managed to review seven of them – the rest next month.) Of course, we had to remind him that marking should bear little relevance to price. Like we said before – crap is crap, even at £2.99.

GET IT HERE FOR £2.99!

HATE



Crusty old arcade-hit *Zaxxon*-inspired game in £2.99 resurrection shock-horror revelation. Read on for the full verdict...

Hostile All Terrain Encounter, for any anti-abbreviationists who may be reading, is a diagonally (yes, diagonally) scrolling shoot-'em-up that I seem to remember from my slightly less fortunate Spectrum days. Each level is in the form of a strip, complete with hills and terrains which you alternate between flying a space ship and driving a tank over. Nothing much has changed from the Spectrum (that, if anything, seemed slightly 'cuter'), but here it's still quite enjoyable and even addictive. The best feature is the pods – these attach themselves to your vehicle, determining the number of lives you have on the next level (as you don't have to start on level one each time, but instead on the one you died on). The worst thing about it is it was given away free with an old, long forgotten copy of New Computer Express, but since it's now impossible to get a back copy, why not try it?
- 68 percent

DEFLEKTOR

Despite appearing undeniably sellotaped to the front cover of a certain rival magazine that we'd all care not to mention (ZERO, actually),

A brain-melting puzzler for only £2.99. Snap it up right now, if you know what's good for you.

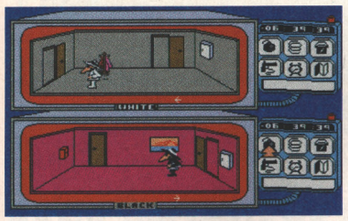
Deflektor is still a rip-snorter of little game, and about as much of a give away as you could get for £2.99 without Jimmy Savile literally coming round your house and handing over a copy for free. To idea is to guide a continuous laser beam from the starting point to the finishing point of each screen by reflection and refraction via strategically placed rotatable mirrors. The puzzle element becomes how to – and in which order to – set the mirrors, so that cells can be zapped (which open up the receiver) whilst being snappy enough about it to avoid overloading your laser by shining it into walls, mines or back on itself. As is ever the case, it sounds silly but ends up as great fun. A bit of a must really. **- 79 percent**

BEYOND THE ICE PALACE

And in today's (cold) blast from the past section we've got *Beyond The Ice Palace* – a six year-old minor hit on the Speccy.

Beyond The Ice Palace and to the North, legend tells of a mystical land where strange creatures dwell. It is a land of fantasy and magic, of goblins and ghosts, of good and evil and also (although they forgot to put bit this in instructions) rather like *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* as well.

This too is a scrolling arcade adventure (with more emphasis on the 'arcade'), and quite a nice one at that, if looking rather heavily dated and distinctly BBCish in the graphics and sound departments. The instant die routine is a little annoying, as is the fact that most of your progress is made by that dull old method of dying-at-a-particularly-tricky-point-then-avoiding-death-next-time-round-because-you-now-know-what-to-do, but you do get eight lives (and don't get sent back all the way to the beginning or anything) to kind of compensate. What can I say? Nothing special, but a bit of fun for the price.
- 53 percent



Off, you go. Go on, buy yourself a copy of *Spy Vs Spy* right this minute...!

place on a horizontally-split screen, with Black Spy and White Spy (either two players at once or one player against the computer) battling through various rooms of an office complex attempting to collect several spy-type artefacts and escape, while at the same time wreaking the maximum havoc on the opposing spy by cunning use of various booby traps. (And not-so-cunning use of a big club, brought into play when the two protagonists enter the same room.) It's all dead simple (at least, it is once you've figured out what the weird flashing icon system is all about), and incredibly funny, except of course when you're on the receiving end of one of the booby traps.

Spy Vs Spy takes two-player conflict to its logical conclusion, stripping away all the unnecessary frills and getting right down to the basic one-upmanship that we all know is what it's all ultimately about, anyway. As such it's practically perfect, and if the graphics are a little on the crude side and the sound minimalist to the point of primitiveness, well, who cares? This is a fabulous game.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

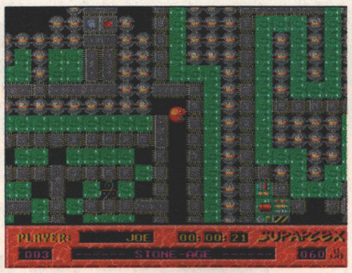
Completely classic two-player fun, still highly entertaining in one-player mode, but that's kind of missing the point. Never mind even the great *Bubble Bobble*, this is what one human against another should be about.

84 PERCENT

SUPAPLEX

Publisher: Action 16
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Earlier this year Digital Integration released *Supaplex* with the launch of their Dream Factory label – that's the one that carries full price arcade-style games. And



***Boulderdash* comes back to haunt us one more time, in the guise of *Supaplex*. A recent full-pricer, getting the budget treatment after a matter of months.**

now here it is on budget already – I can only presume it didn't perform too brilliantly at the steeper price point.

So what've we got? Well, we're told on the packaging that, 'there's 111 imaginative and brain teasing levels to master in this fast moving and indeed puzzling game'. Maybe there are and maybe there aren't – I must admit to being bored stupid by level five, so not only did I not get far enough to confirm the fact, I don't really care very much either way.

But let's not jump the gun. You know the sort of game this is – it's a variation on *Boulder Dash*. You play a *Pac-Man*-like character called Murphy who's 'exploring deep inside a crazy computer' – the object of the game is to collect all the 'Infotrons' and avoid the 'Zonks' (hamburger shaped bombs which will blow to bits if they fall on you). They will fall down the screen when the green material that supports them is eaten away by your good self. If you enjoy very basic graphics and simple maze puzzles, then – hey! – this might be the game for you, but I doubt it. There's no question at all that *Supaplex* sits far more comfortably at £7.99 than it's old price point, but it's still a less-than-essential buy – you'd really have to be in a very poorly stocked computer shop with a fair amount of money burning a hole in your pocket to consider it. Very average.

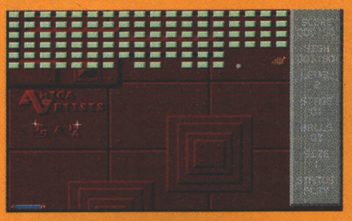
● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fine at PD (indeed, that's what it looks like), but this *Boulderdash* clone still looks a tiresome buy at this new lower price point. Still, the box makes a great stand for a mug of tea or that potted plant your sister left behind before she went off to college.

39 PERCENT

DEMOLITION



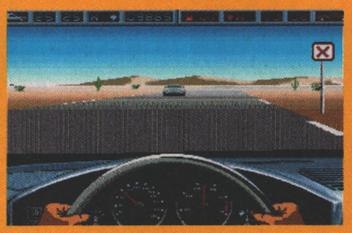
1992 – and people are still writing *Breakout* games! So how's this different? Well, it's got a shoot-'em-up hidden in it...

A straight *Breakout* clone this, but unfortunately it's a straight *Breakout* clone that has been irrefutably out-*Breakout*-cloned by every other *Breakout* clone on the market. The only two notable changes from the original bat'n'brick game reads thus; your bat can be a) altered before play to seven marginally (and pointlessly) different sizes and is b) armed with a laser to shoot Pac-Men and cold roast turkeys (?) who try to rebuild the wall whilst you're busy demolishing it.

So what's wrong with it? Well, unfortunately, without *Arkanoid*'s bonus canisters available for exploration and exploitation, clearing each screen becomes a methodical and tiring process of moving the bat back and fourth to hit the ball. *(Wasn't that the whole idea behind the original* Breakout*? – Ed.)* And besides, all the screens are the same (give or take the irrelevant scrolling backgrounds which change from screen to screen) so the game has no hook or addictiveness to it at all. Hardly three pee's worth of entertainment, let alone three quid's.

- 26 percent

HIGHWAY PATROL II



***Highway Patrol II* – the nightmare returns. If you've ever driven a car on sheet ice, you'll know what this feels like.**

Highway Patrol II is possibly the only in-car driving game, where you have to chase a gangster around a barren featureless desert, available for the Amiga for under three pounds, and if the quality of this one is anything to go by, let's hope also the last.

Starting with the graphics – they're awful, introducing boring scenery and cars that lurch distressingly towards you.

The handling of the car is no better either – expect to spend 98 percent of your time driving across the sand (looking for the road that has just disappeared beneath you) and the other two percent spinning around after supposedly hitting a lamp post that looks at least 20 feet away. In fact, is it wasn't for the fact that the route isn't set (this isn't on a fixed course like *OutRun* – you have to follow the gangster all over the place) then this may have been the first game so bad that it received a minus mark.

- 6 percent

MANHATTAN DEALERS

C64 days are here again in the £2.99 (and can't you just tell) *Manhattan Dealers*. (Is this what the public wants? We think not.)

Not a Professional Ballet Simulator – as one may be forgiven for thinking as our hero nimbly tiptoes across the screen, deftly kicks his toe into the air and gets beaten over the head by a skinhead with a metal pole – this is, in fact, merely a bog-standard beat-'em-up (but one where the main character unfortunately looks a bit of a girl while trying out most of his eight possible fighting moves).

So what's it all about? Well, your job is to seize and destroy all drugs smuggled into Manhattan by furiously beating-everybody-up, pinching their drugs and setting fire to them (taking care not to inhale), whilst charging around a number of screens in order to unearth new baddies and new drugs. Very, very monotonous, in case you were asking – perhaps no more so than many full price beat-'em-ups, but then again two wrongs (and one wrong without even nice graphics to look at) don't exactly make a right.

- 29 percent

FIGHTER MISSION

A very, very (very) simple shoot-'em-up. File it with the thousands of other less-than-inspired horizontal scrollers.

A very simple shoot-'em-up this, so simple that if it wasn't for fear of the sack I could have just repeated the word 'very' 150 times and ended the review there. Suffice to say that moving about and shooting things is all that needs be done – although at times you don't even need to do this; switching on auto-fire and remaining stationary (whilst the colourful parallax crash-into-able scenery scrolls horizontally towards you) is sometimes the most effective method of success.

Moving can even be a bit of a prob at times, as the controls are overly responsive – although they probably have to be, as the sprites (and, for a pleasant change, also their bullets) are huge. And to conclude? *Fighter Mission* is *R-Type* with far fewer spills (and none of the frills), but still a few potential thrills. Not a bad buy.

- 62 percent

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PD

Welcome to the only page in the magazine that's so good it, erm, gets two intro bits – this one, and the one underneath, where Stuart normally 'has his say'. (Look below to see what he's wibbling on about this month.) As for the rest, we've got the great *Lemmingoids*, the okay *Parachute Joust* and the crap (sorry, out of room...)

Hello again chums, and welcome to your favourite bit of the magazine – the second PD column intro. The letters have been flooding in over the past few months from readers telling me how much they love this little corner of the mag, so thanks very much, Gran. As regular disciples will know, this is the bit where I usually pontificate for a while on the state of the PD 'industry', complain a bit about not getting any review games, and then whinge a little about how everything these days seems to be Licenceware and Exclusiveware and Three-Piece Suiteware and all the rest of it, and how difficult it is for a simple Scottish lad like myself to keep up with it all. And this month wasn't going to be any different, until I realised that I'd already used up my word count with all this rubbish and I was just going to have to get on with the reviews. Damn.

GALAGA '92
(Virus Free)

I was really excited when this one came in – 'a great update of a great arcade game', claimed the writing scrawled on the disk label, so I wasted no time in slapping it into the disk drive and standing by to revisit one of my very favourite arcade games ever. Yes, I know, I should have known better, but I'm just a naive romantic when it comes to this kind of thing.

The doc file is full of breathless prose about 16-colour graphics, 300 frames of animation and all the rest of it, but, on every machine we tried the game, what we got was lots of appallingly flickery black-and-white sprites and sluggish, almost-impossible gameplay.

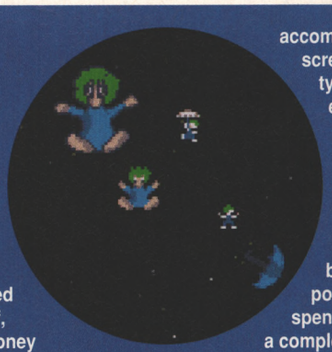
Ahem. The only bit of *Galaga '92* that we could get to work properly. Shame.

A call to Virus Free revealed that they've had a lot of problems with this one, but that they've managed to get it working on one particular Amiga configuration (they couldn't remember which one), so if you've got some really bizarre set-up with loads of extra memory it might well be worth your while giving Virus Free a call and checking it out. For the majority of ordinary Amiga owners out there, though, this is one to steer well clear of.

VERDICT: Not so much a review as a warning, here. *Galaga '92* sounds nice, but if you've got a normal set-up it won't be any use to you at all, so don't go chucking your money away. ★

LEMMINGOIDS
(GSPD)

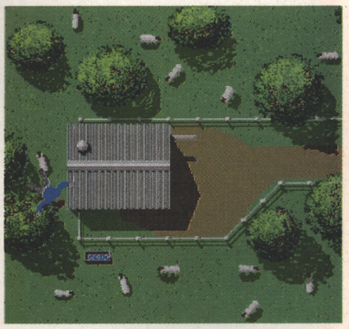
'What, another *Asteroids* game?', I hear you all enquire interestedly. Well, yes, but this isn't just any old *Asteroids* game, oh no. This is an *Asteroids* game we've already reviewed and put on our coverdisk. 'Eh?', I hear you all wonder, but wait – although this is basically exactly the same game as issue five's cover-mounted *Amigoids*, it's worth covering again anyway, because this time it's been 'updated' into a charming and funny spoof on (can you guess?) Psygnosis' classic puzzler *Lemmings*. Instead of asteroids you get various sizes of little lemmings, instead of a spaceship you get an umbrella, and instead of boring old bangs and crashes you get millions of brilliant sound effects sampled from *Lemmings* itself, *Smash TV*, Loadsamoney and *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2*, amongst others. The game is the same as ever, (except with the addition of a neat intro sequence, and the fact that it's now sadly a one meg only job), but it's somehow much more fun to play when thrusting your ship around is accompanied by the screech of a Lotus's tyres and blasting an enemy craft brings an enthusiastic shout of 'Bingo!'. For the sheer enjoyment I'll forgive this one the little hyperspace bug which makes it possible for you to spend the entire game in a completely invulnerable state... Still, nice one.



VERDICT: Even if you've got the game already, it's well worth getting it again just for the chuckle factor. This is what PD's all about. ★★★★★

In *Lemmingoids*, you have to shoot lots of little lemmings. It's a bit like *Asteroids*, I suppose. And, um, that's about it really. (Oh no, lots of space to go yet!) (Erm...) Hey, did I tell you my great new joke? No? Here goes then: What's pink, fluffy and unemployed? Give up? It's *(Snip! -Ed)*

PARACHUTE JOUST
(17 Bit)



Looks just like one of those James Bond games from Domark, doesn't it? Watch your back there, Mr Sheep!

One of the best things about PD is that it allows for games which are good for five minutes' light-hearted fun but would never

CRAZY SUE
(Virus Free)

Hey, something's wrong – we haven't had a cutesy horizontally-scrolling platform game thing yet this month. But – phew – wouldn't you just know it, here comes one now. *Crazy Sue* looks like half-a-dozen other PD games we've reviewed in recent months, but it's the best one I've seen since *Dark Things*.

Predictably simple in concept, all you have to do is get from one side of each of the game's many levels, collecting the key to the end-of-level door and lots of bonus point things, while avoiding the various wildlife and landscape hazards which are, as ever, deadly to the touch. (Why can't we have a game, just once, where woodland creatures run away in fright, or just come up and give you a friendly lick or something?) *Crazy Sue* is a sight more playable than most of the efforts we see though, and surprisingly addictive too (well, I was certainly surprised when I found myself playing it repeatedly, anyway).

Each new level adds just enough in the way of new features and enemies to make you want to see what the next one's got to offer, and the stages are just short enough that when you die and get sent all the way back to the start (annoying though it remains), the game still manages to fall on just the right side of the fine line between compulsiveness and irritation. Lovely, really.

VERDICT: A well-worn theme, but executed as well as anything we've seen in the PD world for ages. It won't change your life, but then you probably like your life fine the way it is. ★★★★★

***Crazy Sue* takes a breather at the end of the first stage to wonder where all the bad guys have gone. Don't worry Susie, there are plenty more where they came from...**

make it as commercial products.

Parachute Joust is a fine example of that notion, being a bizarre and extremely limited little oddity in which two little sprites (this is a one or two player game) jump from an aeroplane, but with only one parachute between them. They must fight with each other as they plunge from 15,000 feet, and the 'chute is likely to change hands several times before one unlucky combatant plummets to his death (?) through the roof of a farmyard barn on the ground below. (A well-done sequence this, as we see the loser first from overhead and then from a side-on perspective crashing through the roof and scaring some nearby sheep and suchlike. Indeed, the standard of presentation is pleasingly high throughout.)

This is accomplished by simple up-down-left-right joystick control and – as you might expect – it's not the most demanding or involving thing you've ever seen. In fact, if you're playing by yourself, you'll be doing well to suffer three games in a row. With another human brought into the equation, though, competitive spirit really comes to the fore and it becomes a lot more satisfying to send your opponent crashing to Earth. All the same, it's a bit of a nine-minute wonder, but like I said before, if you can't have a bit of quick fun with PD, when can you?

VERDICT: You'll play it for a day and never load it again, but good for a laugh anyway. And we all need a bit of a laff now and again, don't we? ★★

SERENE III
(Virus Free)

Right, time for this month's *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* vertically-scrolling blasting game, I think. *Serene III* is, erm, just such a game. It's got shooting in it, it scrolls (vertically, as it happens), it's, um... Oh boy. Oh yeah, and it's got metallic graphics, too! Er... and end of level baddies, of course. Uh... I suppose the second level *is* mildly interesting, with strange gravity-defying stalactites 'falling' sideways at you, but, well... Sorry, but I'm bored now.

VERDICT: Mindbogglingly average zap game with unlikely enemy attack patterns, deeply uninspired graphics and crap sound. Not actually any worse than the majority of PD games in the genre, but you've seen a hundred of these by now. Zzzz. ★

Yes, we're afraid this game really *is* as dull as this screenshot makes it look!

WILBERT'S WINTER WONDERLAND
(Deja Vu)

In *Wilbert's Winter Wonderland*, plum duff and carol singers come accompanied by giant deadly exploding Christmas crackers. Well, it's still not as bad as the Noel Edmonds Show...

Licenceware time again, chums (developing a very familiar look to the column this month, aren't we?), with the sequel to strange platform game *Son Of Wilf* which we reviewed in issue nine. It's in much the same style (and it's one meg again), except this time there's (oddly, I think) a Christmas theme, with our hero killing baddies as he explores a platform landscape by pumping up Christmas crackers until the explode, fatally maiming the bad guys with shrapnel (and presumably bits of razor-sharp plastic false moustache). The graphics are wintry and pretty, but the gameplay is imprecise and unsatisfying. Um, that's about it, really. Can I go yet? *(No – Ed)*

VERDICT: Quite novel and quite cute, but at the end of the day not actually very much fun. ★★

This month's contact addresses: DEJA VU, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs, WN6 7AA 0942 495261; **GSPD**, 46 Weller Drive, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 2YA; **17 BIT**, 1st Floor offices, 2/8 Market St, Wakefield, WF1 1DH 0924 366982; **VIRUS FREE**, 31 Faringdon Road, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5AR 0793 512321

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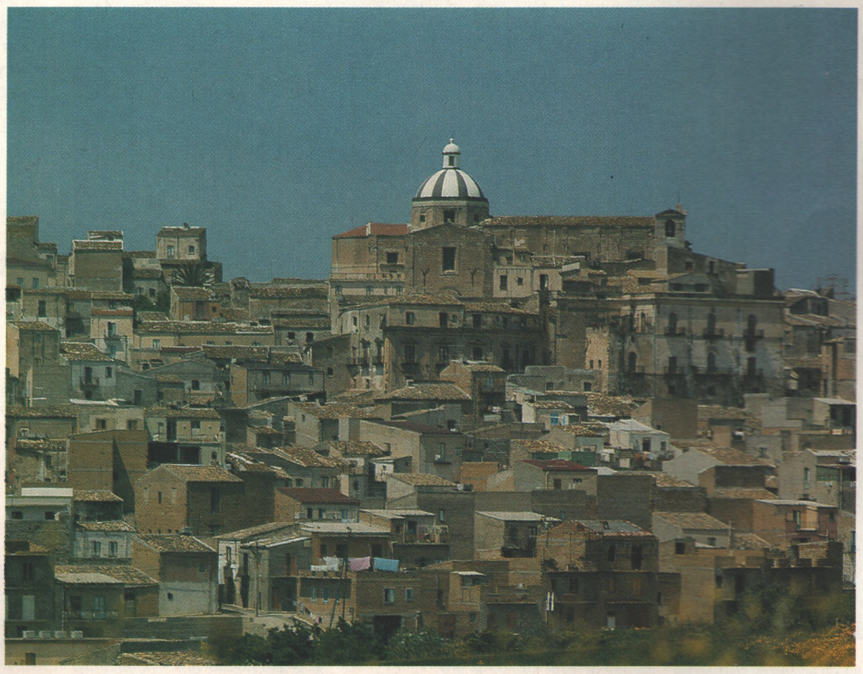
A GREAT HOLIDAY IN SICILY

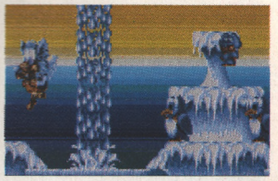
WIN!

AMIGA POWER and RENEGADE present a FIRE & ICE competition

Flushed in a hot and cold sort of a way over the glowing review of *Fire & Ice* (this issue), Renegade (home of the stars) are offering lucky AMIGA POWER readers the chance to win a holiday in scintillating Sicily! You – yes, you! – and a friend could spend five days in the land of sunny villages, and (ahem) Mount Etna. (Don't worry, we don't expect Etna to actually erupt or anything while you're in the vicinity, but please note – readers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)

(*But what about runner-up prizes for the kids? – Ed.*) Thanks, I was just coming to that. Renegade have also kindly donated 10 (that's ten) *Fire & Ice* T-shirts for the runners-up. Groovy, or what?





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- Employees of Future Publishing, Renegade and fans of The Mission are not allowed to enter.
- As stated above, if the winner is under 18 years old, they must be accompanied by an adult.
- The Ed's decision, no matter how cold and harsh, is final.
- Entries without the tally of words you've come up with on the back of the envelope will go in the bin.
- The closing date for entry is 30th June 1992.

FLAMING COLD

So just waddya have to do to win? Okay, try *this* on for size:

We want you to send us as many song titles with the words FIRE or ICE in them as you can.

AND as a final tiebreaker, tell us the name of Stuart's favourite-pop-group-who-have-the-word-FIRE-in-their-name (it's been mentioned before in AMIGA POWER).

Pop your entry into an envelope with your name and address enclosed AND the number of songs you came up with written on the back, and post it to us at: YOU'RE FIRED!, AMIGA POWER, FUTURE PUBLISHING, 29 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, AVON, BA1 2BW.

COMPETIT

DEFINITION OF sound

"WAITER! THERE'S A FLIGHT SIMULATION IN MY SOUP!"

Ha ha ha. Erm...yes. This month in Definition Of Sound we praise the high-fliers and shoot the junk down in flames to bring you a definitive guide to flight sims.

And one of the most common complaints we hear is about the lack of detail in flight sims! Not here – planes from just about every war (and sim) ever seen cram themselves into one Amiga screen. (Special note to any air traffic controllers in the audience: is *this* what your nightmares look like?)

You *could* say the whole flight sim thing started with those old arcade games in the *BIP* mould (you know, one dinky little two-dimensional biplane dogfighting another across a single screen), but we won't. Let's instead say it started way, way back on the Sinclair ZX81 (and you can put that Police Squad gag back in the bag, son, before you get hurt), and has since manifested itself many times on every form of home computer system since, including – of course – the Amiga. As it stands, the Amiga's not the best machine on which to run the convincingly fast displays necessary to simulate flight, but at least it's not the worst...

Early flight simulations concentrated more on simulating the actual piloting of an aircraft, and so placed little importance on the speed and fluidity of the screen display update. There's a fine line to tread between that and a simulation of flight itself – in which the onus is less on the technicalities of pushing buttons and more on developing your flying skills and the execution of marvellous manoeuvres, like the pilot of a stunt plane performing exciting rolls and loops or a graduate from the Tom Cruise

school of dogfighting and Top Gunning.

Flight dynamics – essentially the way the plane handles – are obviously important. The plane has to feel real – but not necessarily *realistic* – in its simulation of the subject in question. If 'real' means that only experienced pilots will be impressed it's of little use to Joe Public. A technically accurate simulation is worthless if it doesn't actually feel as if an aircraft is being flown.

Of course, playing a flight simulation which revolves solely around recreating flight dynamics is about as interesting as reading a book of technical information on the subject. If those magnificent men are to feel as if they are really sat in the seats of their flying machines, a believable – and interesting and interactive – environment needs to be provided. A Real World Environment if you will. If you were piloting a simulated stunt plane, you'd want to put it through its paces around tricky terrain packed with objects to negotiate (in fact, that's at last become the subject of a flight simulation with Disney's *Stunt Island* which is soon to be released over here via Infogrames). Pretend pilots of frisky fighters and chipper choppers need people in tanks and the like to shoot. Some sea might be nice. A few trees would help. And how about some cloud formations?

A careful balance must be struck between providing sufficient significant detail and a suitably speedy and fluid update in order to suspend the player's sense of disbelief. Sadly, most Amiga flight simulations are slower than snails and so are soon brought down to earth, leaving little more than tedious flight models to play with.

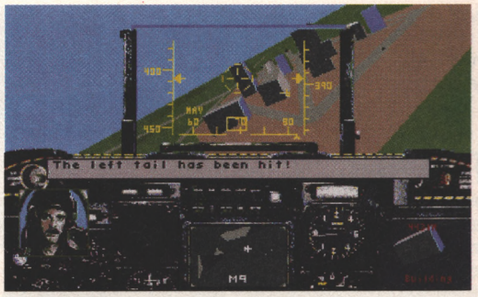
The worst thing about most flight simulations is that their authors take the subject matter a little too seriously for their own good at times. The results are often well-crafted but hollow shells.

THE MESSER-SCHMITT TWINS

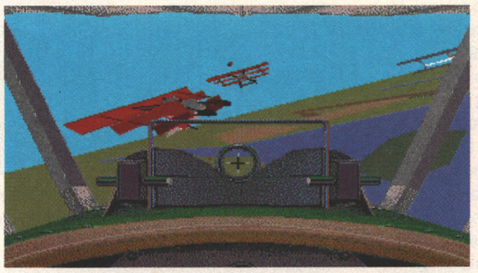
Simulations don't come much more serious than Domark's ***MiG-29***, its sequel ***MiG-29M Super Fulcrum***, and Electronic Arts' ***Birds Of Prey***.

The team behind the two MiG simulations, the Kremlin, would rattle on at great length about the quality of their Flight Dynamics but to no avail. To us humble laymen neither simulation feels radically different from any other, and both are too empty and uptight, so to speak, to provide much excitement for all but the hardcore bore.

On paper, *Birds Of Prey* seems like the ultimate flight simulation. It caters for all (well, most) aircraft tastes as it incorporates 40 different planes to fly, 27 Western and 13 Russian, ranging from fighters to bombers and transporters. Admittedly each one has the same cockpit, but they all purportedly have the correct Flight Dynamics (Big Deal). *BOP*'s attention to detail is quite something, too. Undercarriages retract correctly, hangar doors open and close, radar dishes rotate, the stars and runway lights come out at night, everything's correctly lit and almost everything has an associated sound, and there are 12 flexible mission frameworks on offer. The intent outweighs the result however, for *Birds Of Prey*'s environment lacks oomph much of the time. Its biggest problem though is (well, you should know the drill by now) its speed.



A-10 Tank Killer **– another game let down by lack of enthusiasm in the frame update department.**



Blue Max **– another case of nice graphics, shame they don't move occasionally. A pity, really.**

BUT LET'S GET REALLY SERIOUS...

One simulation that *does* come more serious than Domark's MiG duet and EA's, erm... 40-et, is HiSoft's ***ProFlight***. In *ProFlight*, flying a Panavia Tornado has never been so business-like a task. There are dozens of tweaky options but few interesting missions to tackle, and it all just looks far too plain for its own good.

"F-15II is packed with hellish hit-and-run missions"

At completely the other end of the spectrum, Image Works' ***SkyChase***, in which two wireframe-drawn fighters dog-fought and nothing else, is simple and entertaining enough for about 25 minutes with a pair of human players.

Fortunately, the two styles of flight simulation – the simulators and simulations, if you will – have been merging and maturing over the years to give us such delightful produce as Electronic Arts' ***F/A-18 Interceptor***, Ocean's ***F-29 Retaliator***, MicroProse's ***F-15 Strike Eagle II*** and Core Design's ***Thunderhawk***. They mix arcade-style action with 'simulatoriness' in varying quantities and with differing degrees of success.

F/A-18 Interceptor was the first Amiga flight simulation (and one of the very first Amiga products full stop) to be propelled to instant classic status on its release. Despite its slow visual display, the illusion of Being There is strong, thanks, by and large, to meaty sound and sufficiently escapist mission scenarios that commence with a landing on an aircraft carrier and lead up to daunting task of escorting the President's plane and fending off attack. *F/A-18* has lost little of its charm in the four years since it appeared.

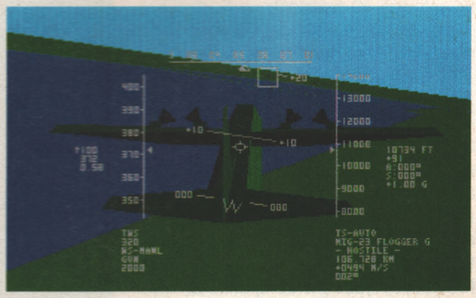
F/A-18 author Bob Dinnerman went on to write two *Jetfighter* simulations in the same vein for the IBM PC and compatibles. *Jetfighter II* is currently being converted to the Amiga by Velocity for release over here through US Gold in September.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE FUTURE

In *F-29 Retaliator*, written for Ocean by Digital Image Design, you get to fly the Grumman F-29 or the Lockheed F-22, a pair of swish – and sexy-looking with it – planes that supposedly represent the future of fighters. With the emphasis firmly on action, the player's participation in four different theatres of war affects their respective outcomes. There's plenty to look at, with some detailed craft, ships, bridges and assorted other landmarks, and it's all rather speedy with it. A pity then that it's littered with little bugs.

Staying with the future of fighters, MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter* brings you the almost radar-invisible F-19 and it's uglier, but even more difficult to detect, stablemate the F-117A. There's vast tactical scope here once you get the hang of flying either plane, but that's easier said than done – *F-19* pokes a toe over The Thin Line into the realms of simulatordom.

But we digress... MicroProse's *F-15 Strike Eagle II* (its predecessor never made it to the Amiga) leans more towards the simulator side of things, but the piloting is presented in such an accessible way that it manages to provide premium playability nonetheless. *F-15 II* is packed with dirty dog-fighting and hellish hit-and-run missions, and when it comes to remote views of the fighter there's a novel Director mode which provides impressive, though sometimes impractical, camera-work. Suffice it to say, there's nothing to touch it.



Birds Of Prey **– 40 planes to choose from, a wealth of scenarios, and tons of graphical detail. No speed, though.**

It looks like Top Gun and, by golly, it plays like Top Gun – *F-15II* from MicroProse is one of the heroes of the sky.

DEFINITION OF sound

INSERT 'CHOPPER' GAG HERE

Core's *Thunderhawk*, on the other hand, lets you pilot a top 'copter bristling with weaponry instead. It's a bad-ass beast to be sure, and it needs to be, what with 60 progressively challenging missions (comprising combat with drug barons and the liberation of entire countries). Ramblers won't appreciate the lack of scenery, but everyone else will find plenty of air- and land-based targets to fight, and it all moves along at a cracking pace. The chopper is a beggar to control at first, but the reward of the thrilling action to come should prove more than adequate inspiration for perspiration.

The world of simulated helicopter flight is also occupied by Cosmi's ***Super Huey*** and MicroProse's ***Gunship***. The rough and ready *Super Huey* adopts an arcade action stance with its simple, crude and limited mission structure incorporating bland interceptions of enemy craft and the rescue of VIPs from the mountains.

But Super Hueys are for the girls. Real men fly Gunships. Real men who aren't bored easily, that is, for *Gunship*'s a long-winded simulation of the Apache Gunship and appropriate tasks.

Indeed, helicopter simulations offer the greatest potential for fun, as they can combine the high-speed and high-technological aspects of today's top fighters with more direct combat elements. What a pity, then, that few helicopters are set to take off on the Amiga in the near →

DEFINITION OF sound

future. (see THAT FLIGHT-SIM FUTURE IN FULL – the closing section on page 93) Still, there are always plenty of fighters to fly...

EYES LIKE A HAWK

Spectrum HoloByte's ***Falcon*** was converted to the Amiga by Rowan and was one of the first flight simulations to incorporate remote views of the craft for a more cinematic experience to further enhance the feeling of Being There. It doesn't take a huge effort to get to grips with *Falcon*, but there's limited playability on offer as you attempt to earn merits and win medals through a dozen samey missions, most of them concerning straightforward combat with a MiG or three and SAM sites. It's all a bit too beige for our liking, too, but all told *Falcon*'s still worth a flutter (especially if you link two Amigas together and dogfight against a chum).

AND THERE'S MORE...

A new colour scheme (primarily green) and a further two-dozen missions came courtesy of a pair of mission disks for use with the original *Falcon* program. The principle of mission disks is a sound one, but the potential wasn't realised here. Volume One offered little more than more of the same, although Volume Two almost made amends by providing a simple war situation simulation with more planes, tanks and helicopters to shoot down in order to gain air superiority.

TAKING TO THE SKIES IN A C5

Digital Integration, regarded by some as flight simulation kings for the Spectrum all those years ago, also decided to offer the opportunity of carving a career as an F-16 combat pilot with their ***F-16 Combat Pilot***. It's all very technical and feels a little too flat for pleasure at times, but there is fun to be had with the five mission types (including air-to-air interception and offensive counter-air operations) and a war simulation of sorts in which you command a squadron of F-16s.

LEARN TO STOP WORRYING WITH...

Written for Activision, Vektor Grafix's ***Fighter Bomber*** earned the seasoned developers a pretty penny apparently, even though the product's not up to much. A choice of seven fighter bombers is available in this simulation of the Curtis E LeMay bombing trophy (no, we hadn't heard of it before this product either) which entails the completion of bombing runs and the occasional spot of mid-air refuelling. *Fighter Bomber* sports plenty of detail but the combat element has been watered down to near-tasteless proportions and ultimately it's No Big Deal.

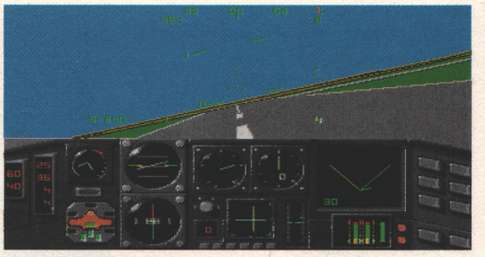
MEANWHILE, BACK FROM THE FUTURE

Casting aside these contemporary crates for a moment, let's take a Quantum Leap (as in the top telly series, for a real quantum leap would actually be a very small one) back to the days when the boys were men in the formative years of flight and The Great War. In an attempt to try something different, many software publishers have been simulating this era with regularity of late. American Interactive Movie experts Cinemaware seemed to break the mould with ***Wings***, but it turned out it wasn't strictly a flight simulator – more a simulation of the bygone age in which flying a World War One plane was integral to success. Assuming the role of a novice pilot, the primary objective is survival in the air to win appraisal on the ground. *Wings* works well – with two disk drives anyway, as there's heaps of disk accessing between 'scenes'. The flying's sluggish but often hair-raising (mainly thanks to the sound FX), and the "Chocks Away!" spirit of adventure is ever-present.

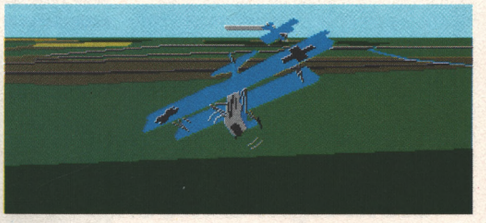
"Knights Of The Sky – the office favourite"

Perhaps an even more surprising breaking of the mould was ***Battlehawks 1942*** from Lucasfilm Games. Having made a sizable mark with nifty mouse-driven adventures such as *Zak McKracken* and *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade*, Lucasfilm Games threw up this simulation of aerial combat over the Pacific. In *Battlehawks*, the player can fly either American or Japanese planes, and there's the facility to replay your role in the straightforward shooting action, but... Oh, look, it's more convincing than most but far from commendable at full price.

Lucasfilm's second flight simulation, ***Their Finest Hour: The Battle Of Britain***, was more impressive, though still lacking in the speed and smoothness stakes. This well-rounded recreation of the eponymous aerial event sees you piloting either British fighters or German bombers (in which you can flit between the positions of rear gunner, pilot and so on) or playing the part of Air Vice Marshall for a more strategic bent. With its comprehensive mission editor and a striking manual, *Their Finest Hour* has depth, an unrivaled atmosphere, but an unhealthy slothy feel.



MiG-29 Super Fulcrum **– it may have all the correct flight dynamics, but it's too po-faced by half.**



Red Baron **– great to look at, but don't expect this dynamic display to move in the next three hours.**

Lazy pilots who couldn't be bothered with all that Editor malarkey could always seek solace in a mission disk. ***Their Finest Missions: Volume One*** provides 23 new missions, some of them involving yet more escorting of fighters and the undertaking of bombing runs, but others offering new solo missions deep into enemy territory.

"F/A-18 has lost little of its charm after four years"

GET THE MAX (OR NOT)

Three Sixty's ***Blue Max: Aces Of The Great War*** for Mindscape is not so ace. Despite dozens of options and smart sound, *Blue Max*'s World War I dogfighting action is far too slow to be playable. Honestly, it's a joke – but the laugh's on you if you buy it.

Dynamix's ***Red Baron*** is no better (in fact it's considerably worse). Sure, it looks mighty impressive with its lush packaging, detailed manual, options galore and many missions (including taking a whole squadron of planes into the thick of it). But you try playing it... it's about as fast and smooth as rubbing two pieces of sandpaper together (that's to say, it's rubbish).

A HARD KNIGHT'S DAY

MicroProse's ***Knights Of The Sky*** is the office favourite in the World War One simulation department. Buzzing around in slow but agile little fliers such as the Fokker and the Sopwith Camel (not to mention 18 other similar 'knights of the sky') is most agreeable. Flying biplanes is *not* like flying modern fighters, a fact admirably brought home by *Knights Of The Sky*. You can easily believe the trouble the aces of the Great War had just to stay in the air, let alone dogfighting with the likes of the Red Baron. The objective in *Knights Of The Sky* is blatant: shoot down as many opponent planes as possible to become the ace of aces. Its ace in the hole, however, is its verdant countryside resplendent with trees, clouds and furrowed fields which moves around with conviction (although the display does slow down a bit when there's a lot going on on screen). *Knights Of The Sky* is genuine seat-of-yer-pants stuff, more gripping than any Hitchcock thriller and great fun to boot.

GETTING LEGLESS

Not ones to miss a trick – eventually, anyway – are Virgin, who are set to launch their first real flight simulation with Rowan's *Reach For The Skies*. Originally intended for release through Mirrorsoft and to celebrate – sorry, commemorate – the 50th Anniversary of The Battle Of Britain, *Reach For The Skies* integrates the flight simulation of British fighters and German bombers of the era with a recreation of the event itself. That's due in September, but Rowan have already been involved in one war simulation – when they wrote Spectrum HoloByte's ***Flight Of The Intruder***, the simulation of the film of the Stephen Coonts book which concerns the exploits of a pilot in the Vietnam War. The film didn't get a chance to prove itself, thanks to the Gulf War, but that was a blessing in disguise as it was a load of old tosh, unlike the simulation (which, sadly, didn't get to prove itself either what with UK publisher Mirrorsoft's demise) which

Flight Of The Intruder **– one of those flight sims you'll either love or hate. Slow, but with *excellent* period detail.**

F/A-18 Interceptor **– it's ancient, but it's cheap now, and excellent fun. An ideal first flight sim to get you going.**

has plenty to offer.

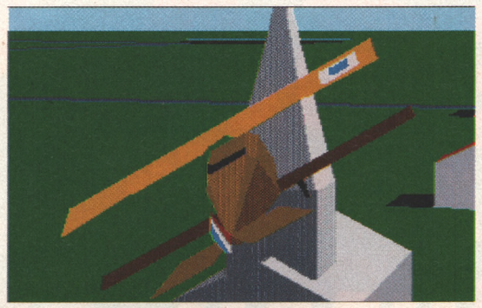
FOTI is surprisingly engrossing. Surprising because it doesn't simulate sleek fighters or choppers but instead concentrates on the slow and terribly uninteresting A-6 Intruder (there is also the option of flying the more remarkable F-4 Phantom). Jaw-slacking scenery is not in evidence here either, although what's present does feature adequate detail. *FOTI* takes some getting into, too, so what makes it such a doozy?

Its atmosphere, that's what – so rich you can smell the napalm. The thrills come thick and fast once the initial effort has been made and you begin to embark on one of the many varied missions in a squadron of up to eight planes, flitting your control between them as often as you see fit, dodging flak, taking on MiGs and bombing installations. Well, on Amigas fatter than half a megabyte anyway. Two Amiga can be linked together, too, so you can fly alongside a friend.

THUNDER, ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

The Avenger A-10 Thunderbolt (nick-named The Warthog because it's so ugly) is one of the slowest planes in the air but one of the hardiest – it can still fly even with the crap shot out of it. You may have seen its lethal 30mm seven-barrel guns, capable of firing an awesome 4,200 rounds of armour-piercing ammunition a minute, in action in the Gulf War footage shown on the telly. What a sterling opportunity for a rock-hard flight simulation you may think. Yes indeed, and sadly there still is...

***Their Finest Hour* – excellent in the atmosphere stakes, slightly less brilliant as far as speed is concerned...**



***Knights Of The Sky* – what can we say? AMIGA POWER's favourite flight sim, and by a long (long) way...**

Dynamix's impressive-looking ***A-10 Tank Killer*** falls short of the mark. Putting aside for one moment the fact that the guns in this simulation seem about as beefy as a carrot, *A-10* actually manages to generate a believable real-world atmosphere, and its land-bound-target-busting missions provide sufficient fodder for itchy trigger fingers. But at the end of the day it's far too slow. It takes a memory-fat Amiga to run it, too.

WHY CAN'T WE JUST LOVE EACH OTHER?

But all this killing's so senseless. It makes us cry. Why can't we simply fly high in the sky? Well we can with ***Chuck Yaeger's Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0*** from Electronic Arts.It features a choice of 18 planes (ranging from a Spitfire to Stealth bomber and even the Space Shuttle, but they all seem to fly pretty much the same) and an even wider selection of options.

There're no dogfighting or tank-busting here – instead you get to perform simple stunts. There are problems though: too much disk accessing, an odd control mode, and it's all too slow and uninteresting to play anyway. Perhaps fortunately, Electronic Arts aren't planning on bringing *Chuck Yaeger's Air Combat* to the Amiga.

GIIIT YER LUVVERLY FLAAAT SIMYERLASHUNS 'ERE!

A-10 TANK KILLER	DYNAMIX (SIERRA)	£25.99	★
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CHUCK YAEGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER	ELECTRONIC ARTS	£25.99	★
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II	MICROPROSE	£34.99	★★★★★
F-16 COMBAT PILOT	DIGITAL INTEGRATION	£25.53	★★★
F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	DELISTED	★★★★ *
F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER	MICROPROSE	£30.64	★★★★
F-29 RETALIATOR	OCEAN	£25.53	★★★★
FALCON	SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE	£25.53	★★★
FALCON: THE MISSION DISKS VOLUME ONE	SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE	£15.31	★★
FALCON: THE MISSION DISKS VOLUME TWO	SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE	£15.31	★★
FIGHTER BOMBER	ACTIVISION	DELISTED	★★
FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER	SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE (MIRRORSOFT)	£30.99	★★★★
FLIGHT PATH 737	ANCO (PRISM)	£2.99	★
GUNSHIP	MICROPROSE	£25.53	★★
JUMP JET	ANCO (PRISM)	£2.99	★
KNIGHTS OF THE SKY	MICROPROSE	£34.99	★★★★★
MiG-29	DOMARK	£29.99	★★★
MiG-29M SUPER FULCRUM	DOMARK	£39.99	★★★
PROFLIGHT	HISOFT	£39.95	★★
RED BARON	DYNAMIX (SIERRA)	£25.99	★
SKYCHASE	IMAGE WORKS (MIRROR IMAGE)	£9.99	★★
STRIKE FORCE HARRIER	MIRRORSOFT (MIRROR IMAGE)	£9.99	★★
SUPER HUEY	COSMI (ELECTRONIC ZOO)	DELISTED	★
THEIR FINEST HOUR	LUCASFILM GAMES (US GOLD)	£30.99	★★★
THEIR FINEST MISSIONS	LUCASFILM GAMES (US GOLD)	£15.99	★
WINGS	CINEMAWARE (MIRRORSOFT)	£25.99	★★★

* ONLY AVAILABLE ON THE AIR LAND SEA COMPILATION: £34.95

DEFINITION OF sound

Pilots are undoubtedly seen as rather dashing jet-setting chaps who can pull a string of dolly birds as soon as look at them – especially those god-like airline pilots (mile-high club and all that). What a pity there aren't any female fans featured in Anco's ***Flight Path 737*** or Thalion's ***A-320 Airbus***. Both are so dreary they could do with a bit of sauce to liven them up, although in fairness *A-320 Airbus* is the far more comprehensive and endurable of the two (but then, that's not really saying much, is it?).

THAT FLIGHT SIM FUTURE IN FULL

So we're still really waiting for the definitive Amiga flight sim. The question is, are we going to see it in the near future? Well, let's take a peek into the Definition Of Sound crystal ball and see what's coming up (and hence, inevitably, down).

Air Duel from Glynn Williams looked like being the last word in slick arcade-style fight'n'flight sims (with the added attraction of several time zones to dogfight through), but unfortunately it's been put back until next year at the earliest.

F/A-18 author Bob Dinnerman's PC follow-up *Jetfighter II* is currently being converted for the Amiga for release through US Gold in September, and *F-29* creators DiD are working on a new sim which may metamorphose into an *F-29* sequel. From the people who brought you *Fighter Bomber* (Vektor Grafix) there'll be simulations of the Space Shuttle through Virgin, and of the B-17 Flying Fortress through MicroProse (who are also bringing out a Harrier game in November, incidentally), both due in the late summer, and lastly, Argonaut (*Birds Of Prey*) are working on *ATAC* (Airborne Tactics And Command), which MicroProse should be releasing at around the £45 mark (ulp!), also in September.

YOU'VE LOST THAT FLYING FEELIN'

The bad news, though, is that a number of flight sims which were pencilled in for the Amiga are now very unlikely to make it. Electronic Arts won't now be converting their impressive PC helicopter game *LHX Attack Chopper*, and whirlybird fans will also be disappointed that MicroProse are unlikely to bring *Gunship 2000* to the Amiga, and that Digital Integration's *Gunship* title – which has been 'in the pipeline' for a couple of years now – is still no nearer to its completion.

And it gets worse! The well-received follow-up to US Gold's *Their Finest Hour*, *Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe*, won't now be showing up on our machine, and nor will Spectrum Holobyte's potentially well-groovy *Avenger A-10*.

But – hey! – let's not be downhearted. After all, we've always got *Tower FRA...* ●

tel: +44(0)1525 718181 • fax: +44(0)1525 713716 Delta, American Express etc. at no extra charge. Postage is £2 for the first item, add £1 for each additional item. Courier

Next month's *Sega Power* (the magazine with bags of Plymouth Argyle) makes hay while the sun shines in the six yard box! There are some wicked FREE earphones on the front too!

BRILLIANT EARPHONES FREE WITH THE JUNE ISSUE!

June issue on sale on Thursday 7 May. We've booked it to be sunny, so you'll get a tan on the way to the newsagents too.

Pukka!

It's funny, but of all the magazines at Future Publishing – and there are plenty of them, as fans of the small print on the contents page will know – we seem to get the strangest letters. Some (okay, lots) consist mainly of (occasionally veiled) threats or insults, loads beg for free games, others are completely incomprehensible, and then there's this lot...

DO THE write THING

● Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath Avon, BA1 2BW

'MISJUDGED AND ILL-FORMED'

Dear Sirs,
We were highly aggrieved to read the misjudged and ill-formed reply in issue 12 of AMIGA POWER to an enquiry from a Mr Kamaris of Sheffield.

Whilst we note you confirm twice that the system, known as Electronic Distribution of Software, is perfectly legitimate, your comments that it is 'weird and bizarre' and 'blur the distinction between the real thing and piracy' are both incorrect and misinformed.

Retailers find it hard to justify stocking budget titles, as the return on their investment at £3.99 to £7.99 is minimal, especially when they are left often with stock which sits on the shelf gathering dust. *(As we also noted in the reply – Ed.)*

Consequently, EDOS provides the only viable method of stocking a wide choice for consumers across all major computer formats.

The software is provided by top European software houses, and is stored in the shops on CD-ROMS, for duplication on demand. The software produced is virus free, and carries all the publishers original protection against piracy.

As members of ELSPA and FAST, we campaign actively against piracy, and our publishers will concur that their interests are protected comprehensively by EDOS. Since many publishers feel that review copies are a source of piracy, we believe that magazines may be ill-advised to comment on the issue of piracy.

If you wish to make the comments you have then we feel that your staff should at least research their replies instead of pontificating from ignorance.
Yours faithfully, Jim Wilmer, General Manager, Software On Demand

Jim, for the sake of goodwill I'm going to ignore your offensive comments on review copies as a source of piracy, save to say that if you've got the slightest evidence to back up what 'many publishers feel', let's hear it. (In my experience it's simply not true – and nor do the software houses feel it to be true either.)

As for the little piece which has incurred your wrath, sorry to have caused offence, but we can only speak from our experience. When we went out and bought some EDOS games from a local shop recently, we came back with some pretty shoddy packaging (certainly far inferior to that which you get with 'real' Hit Squad or GBH games, say). Worse, the games came on little red disks with blank labels on them (there was space for the game's title to be written on by hand). Now, while we recognise the strengths of the system (particularly for shops, who no longer actually have to stock older products they don't expect to sell many copies of) and its perfect legitimacy, we also can't help but feel that when people talk about the 'perceived value' of a game having as much to do with the sort of box it comes in and the manual you get with it as the game disk itself, they've got a point.

Certainly, the 'perceived value' of what's to all intents and purposes a blank disk, rattling around inside a huge plastic case with a multi-format inlay and minimal instructions, isn't significantly higher than that of a copy from a pirate with a photocopy of the manual, no matter how 'real' or legitimate it may be. The point is, we don't know anybody who'd buy an EDOS game if they had the choice of a real one, and that's a problem.

'I PEELED IT OFF'

Dear AP,
I was reading through the letters in issue 12 and saw the one from Peter Jones about *Scooby Doo And Scrappy Doo*. I thought, 'how very odd', because the same thing has happened to me. I bought the game a few months ago from WH Smith, and that also had a typed label that had been stuck on. *(What, WH Smith did? – Ed.)* So I peeled it off and to my surprise the disk appears to have originally contained *Top Cat In Beverley Hills Cat* on the ST! What do I do?

Also, is it just you and me in the world who like *Rainbow Islands*? All my friends think that I have cracked up because I enjoy it. I think that they only don't like it because they can't do it! All the people who say it is rubbish deserve to be locked away for life. What do you think?
Yours, Tim Godfree, Chorley

We think they should be beaten every day with big sticks with nails in the end as well.

'WHY THIS PEJORATIVE TONE?'

Dear Sirs,
I purchased issue 12 of AMIGA POWER a few days ago and was pleased as usual to learn that you people are really making an effort to produce a better-than-average magazine, and more important, that you are succeeding. Your articles are filled with a sharp sense of humour, and you've achieved a superb blend of ads, previews, illustrations, articles and much *(Much! – Ed.)* more. This is not to say, however, that you are perfect!

For some obscure reason, you people are systematically waging a merciless crusade against wargames. Remarks like 'can't you just tell it's a wargame?' (p74) or 'just because it's a wargame' and '...even wargamers' (p101) litter your otherwise brilliant magazine.

Why this pejorative tone? As a devoted wargamer I cannot help myself from being irritated at first, then offended, then infuriated by such remarks. Not as infuriated, though, as when I read Mr Jonathan Davies' article on *Panzer Battles*, complete with snoring sounds. A few lines later he admits that he 'didn't have the time to explore the game's more deeply buried intricacies...', even though it is a great part of his job. *(A bloody horrible bit, more like – JD.)* And by the way, Mr Davies, in the decrypting of icons which you find so confusing the manual is usually a great help. *(Ah, but we never send Jonathan the manuals. We don't want to make things TOO easy for him – Ed.)*

Wargames are not played for superb graphics' sake, nor for the sake of applying 100 pounds per square inch of pressure on your joystick in a rapid succession of directions, while frantically trying to rheumaticize your thumb on the fire buttons. *(Er, Jonathan? I think we've just found out what you've been doing wrong... – Ed.)* Those are not the criteria by which wargames should be judged. Rather, they should be judged on their ability to transport the player to the field of battle by historical and technical accuracy.

Wargames are for the people who feel the frost bite of the steppe wind, and the rising sun in their eyes, and smell the gunpowder and burnt diesel. After all, we can't all identify ourselves with umbrella-armed kiddies battling monsters not unlike the ones my son plays with in the bathtub.
Yours faithfully, Louis Hermelin, Slagelse, Denmark.

But Louis, you yourself say it's all about atmosphere. We can't think of anything less atmospheric than half-a-dozen nested Workbench screens crammed with incomprehensible icons and crappy little amorphous blobs representing a tank division (or whatever). We've got nothing against wargames, just bad programming.

'C'MON EVERYBODY'

Dear AP,
I am writing to compliment you on being the best Amiga magazine there is. But →

£50 SOFTWARE winner

'GOING DAFT AND SCREAMING'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
You all know how good the *Tetris* game is that was given away on coverdisk number seven? *(Yes we do. Fab wasn't it? Back copies of issue seven are still available from page 110 . Thank you – Back Issues Dept.)* Well, my boyfriend and I have discovered an even more frustrating game. *(Ooer – Ed.)* It's called *Blindtris* and (apologies to people who have no friends) it is a two-player-only game. It involves booting up *Super Twintris* as normal, then the first player grabs a joystick (I've always wondered why it's called a JOYstick) and turns AWAY from the screen. The second player (for all idiots reading – the one FACING the screen), then has to direct the other player where to stick the blocks (this is done by going daft and screaming, "left, left, no, right a bit, twist, no, go back left one, aaaggggghhhh" etc).

Now although this may not sound much on paper, I do think that you should find a friend and try it out, it's hilarious to say the least. Try it out everyone, I'm sure you'll love it. My *Twintris* highscore is 2328 (now don't be mean, I know it's crap), and our *Blindtris* highscore is 405. We all love AMIGA POWER,
Miss B LLoyd, Walsall.

Now this is what we like to hear – that we're bringing people closer together, the AMIGA POWER way. Here, have some free games, B.

DO THE write THING

DRAGON NINJA winner

'ALL OF YOU ARE ILLITERATE'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I was looking through some old issues of AMIGA POWER and noticed that you gave *Captain Planet* a crap review. I dispute this because I like the game and anyone who doesn't is stupid 'cos I'm being entered for advanced level Maths at GCSE.

Anyone could see that the brilliant graphics and gameplay make this an instant classic. The sound effects and music are also excellent. I got it free with my Cartoon Classics pack so that means it's really good value for money, too.

I also like flight sims and I'm really good at them – I always beat my mate Iain Scrimgeour at them. Only queers don't like flight sims. In my opinion car games like *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2* should be banned because I'm not very good at them.

I think AMIGA POWER is a great mag – does that mean I get a free copy of *Dragon Ninja? (Yes! – Ed.)* I think I deserve one, and an AMIGA POWER T-shirt if you've got one spare. *(Don't push your luck – Ed.)* The only thing wrong with AMIGA POWER is that all of you are illiterate. I mean, I'm heading for a B in my English GCSE so I'm really smart.

Yours sheepishly, Stephen P Makepeace, Windsor

Sledgehammer sarcasm – we love it! You will write in and let us know how you got on in your exams, Steve, won't you?

I'm very disappointed in the price you charge, £3.75 is totally unjustifiable. Even with two disks on the cover, which only cost you about 25p each, that leaves a massive £3.25 for a magazine, which is totally unacceptable. Okay you're not the only ones, but so what! Do you have to be greedy because someone else is? Don't even bother saying 'Well what about all the stuff on the disks?', because that is all free. *(Yeah, sure, Tib duplicate 200,000 disks for us a month for free, just for the fun of it – Ed.)* I hope you don't hide this letter away from everyone else, it's about time this came out into the open. C'mon everybody, write in and be heard.

Yours sincerely, Demos Nicholas, London

Sorry, Demos, but your calculations are way out – I only wish we really were making the sort of money you obviously think we are! Let's do a quick sum, shall we? For a start there's a disk shortage on at the moment, so you can call the price of a disk something a lot closer to 40p. Two of those on the cover is 80p, but remember that when we up the price of the mag for a double disk issue, we only get half that money (the rest goes to WH Smith or whoever you bought us from).

Then you've got the far-from-inconsiderable sum of money we have to pay the disk duplicators, getting the labels printed, getting the disks stuck on the mag, printing the mag, paying our salaries, all the overheads, distribution costs, freelance budgets and the rest of it to come. Who knows, we might even make a bit of profit at the end of it all. We're not in this just for the good of our health, y'know.

'PSYGNOSIS...TOTAL CRAP'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
There is only one thing missing from AMIGA POWER at the moment – Hammer films. I know that AP is principally supposed to deal with Amiga software, but Hammer's productions are simply masterpieces and worthy of the attention of any specialist computers monthly. Why bother reviewing games such as *Titus The Fox* or *Parasol Stars* when you can devote your time to in-depth analyses of 'Dracula Has Risen From The Grave' and the early career of Peter Cushing? If it's that boring, constricting title of yours that's stopping your publication from achieving its full destiny, then I suggest a change. 'Hammer Power' has a certain ring to it, don't you think?

Changing the subject completely, Ian Hetherington of Psygnosis' prediction that CD-ROM is going to 'go ballistic' is as likely to be fulfilled as my prediction that the Sinclair QL will be Britain's best-selling computer of 1997, because he fails to take one thing into account. It's total crap. Everybody knows it's total crap, and are thus more likely to buy a Norwegian ice cube factory. Then again, every game that Psygnosis has ever released (with the possible exception of *Lemmings*) is total crap, and they manage to find hundreds of thousands of people looking to spend the cash they have left over from the purchase of Scandinavian frozen water manufacturers on each game. When I'm leader of the free world, things are going to be different.

Yours yet again, HRH Chris Denton, Emperor of The United States Of America.

Nurse!

'DONGLES – MORE PLEASE'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
Strange letter, this one *(We'll be the judges of that – Ed.)*, but I believe the more letters you get like this, the more the computer industry will be able to change for the better. *(Are you listening, IBM? – Ed.)*

Firstly, instruction manuals. In English only, please. It's most annoying to pick up a great big manual and think 'What an in-depth game this must be' only to find you have the same manual 60 times each in different languages.

Big boxes, they're great. Although the likes of *Leander* is going over the top a bit. Dongles – more please, how I hate to buy a game to find everyone else has got a hacked copy. Disk labels, the right way up thank you, so you can read them when they're in your disk box.

Software prices, pretty obvious really. I have not and never will pay £35 for a computer game (apart from *F1 Grand Prix*). One last thing, all games should have a high score save option. *(E ven Chess Champion 2175? – Ed.)* That's my opinion, and if you don't like it, tough.

Yours sincerely, David Shattu, Chiswick

Fine.

'I TOTALLY AGREE WITH STUART'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I am writing to you about several things. I must congratulate Stuart Campbell on putting up with all the readers who write in complaining about the fact that *Rainbow Islands* is the all time number one game. I totally agree with Stuart *(Okay, who's been letting Stuart edit the letters page again? – Ed.)* that it is THE best platform game and maybe THE best computer game of all time.

There are also some other points I would like to make about more games, especially the likes of *Populous 2*. I don't know why Matt gave it 93 percent at all! I have recently purchased *Populous 2* and I don't see what the fuss is about – it's got nothing like the lasting appeal of *Populous*, probably because of the similarity to its predecessor. Well, that's that cleared up.

And one more thing, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* scored 90 percent and got five red stars in The Bottom Line, while *John Madden Football* also scored 90 percent but only got five black stars in The Bottom Line. Can you explain this, and don't just say 'No'!

Yours, Samuel Batley, Isle Of Wight.

Er, we can explain it, but, um, we're not going to.

'A DIFFERENT EXCUSE'

Dear AP,
One of my friends says that he has got *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Every time I have asked to see it he has made up a different excuse.

When the last issue of AP came out I read in it that *Sonic* like *Mario* is very unlikely to come out for the Amiga. Then I showed it to my friend and he said that his *Sonic* was on Public Domain.

Can you please tell the nation if and when *Sonic* might come out for the Amiga?

Yours truthfully, James Gale, Arlesey

Sonic *might appear on the Amiga eventually, but the chances are there'll be an ice-skating competition in Hell on the day it gets released. Don't hold your breath.*

'GET A BISCUIT'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I am writing to complain about your decision to withdraw the Oh Dear... article. I read with astonishment that it was due to pressure from the software industry. If this is the case why don't you give every game you review 95 percent and roll on your back and wag your tail (you may get a biscuit and extra advertising revenue) as well? If software houses are happy to splash good reviews and high percentages all over their advertisements, they should take the stick they receive in the Oh Dear... column with grace and try not to publish crap games again.

I found that the Oh Dear... column was perhaps one of the bravest and certainly the best piece of writing in any of the magazines I've read. I think it's a sad day for the games playing public to see AMIGA POWER sell themselves out to the software houses.

Yours faithfully, Bruce Bennett, Dundee.

'I STOPPED BUYING ACE'

Dear AP,
When I receive your mag through the post each month, I have a specific order in which I read your regular features: first I read your letters (for education), then the Oh Dear... column (for amusement) and last, your game reviews. So very happy at receiving your anniversary issue, I quickly flicked to the back (which, for some reason, is where the letters are situated), read other people's views, and then flicked back to the front. But Oh Dear...

You wimps! You ninnies! You pompous, self-centred excrements! Have some dignity for goodness sake. Stand firm on your ground. You aren't owned by the software industry, so why grovel to their wishes? You are, however, owned by us (the buying public). Let me explain. I used to buy ACE, but now it's gone. The reason I stopped buying ACE was because it chucked out one of its best ideas – you know, the one where information from all the different magazines was compiled and placed in charts and stuff – and replaced it with badly-organised six-page reviews. Oh Dear...

I'm not saying the same fate will kill you, just that something similar could happen if you don't reinstate what was undoubtedly your best original feature. Neither am I saying that the Hurrah! feature was a bad idea. Perhaps the two columns should be put side by side to show the difference between a good and bad game.

Oh, and if a programmer spends half a year writing a load of crap, it's his

problem if he gets laughed at.
Yours, John Hinton, Hassocks.

These are just two of the disturbingly numerous upset and angry letters we got from readers reacting to the death of the Oh Dear... column in issue 12. Seems some people don't understand irony when they read it, I guess. If you really *want to know why we've not done an Oh Dear... recently it's because we were getting bored of it – the joke had run thin.*

However, if and when we work up enough bile about some old game to give it another go the column – and maybe even the mysterious Hurrah! column too – will be back. Anyone else out there miss it horribly...?

'AVERAGE SALARY'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I am a 14-year-old boy and I am coming up to my options at school. In the future I wish to work for an Amiga magazine (writing reviews for games). Please could you tell me what qualifications are needed to work for your magazine, and also what the average salary is?
Yours faithfully, Simon Chubb, Padstow.

Qualifications? Well, being able to spell is truely critical (little spelling joke there, by the way), but other important factors include not requiring sleep or food, having the ability to lie convincingly when software houses phone you up and ask what mark their latest game got, and not minding when the whole world calls you a fool (or worse) for not liking Magic Pockets *or* Kick Off 2. *Average salary? Very. Hope this helps.*

'WE DEMAND TO KNOW'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
We have noticed the disturbing habit of certain High Street stores to give out 500 Pluses when good old A500s are sent for repair. While I am sure they will prove useful, we feel that we have lost cash on all the games which don't run on the Plus.
(Yeah, but you can use the money you've saved getting a free memory upgrade to buy a ROM-sharer, which will let you use both old and new – Ed.)

Also, the people we know who own Pluses are all fat. Is there some connection here? Will some unknown computer virus turn us all into chubbies? We demand to know!
Yours angrily, D Cruickshank and R (funky munky) Smith, Prestwick.

Next!

'A POSSIBLE SOLUTION'

Dear AP,
Recently I have read in the letters pages of some magazines letters about the high price of software. One of the replies said that as long as the public are happy to pay £26 and above and DO pay that much, the prices will not come down.

This led me to think of a possible solution – boycotting. Magazines, such as your own, could place adverts encouraging the public to boycott either an individual company (eg MicroProse) or the whole full price side of the industry, until they dropped the £26 standard to a £20 standard (which would not at all be an unreasonable drop). If they did drop their prices to £20, they would probably make up the money lost in dropping the prices by increased sales. This would also mean less piracy, as more people would be inclined to buy a £20 game that they would otherwise pirate if it was £26.

I hope you will consider these thoughts.
Yours, Paul Sheriffs, Northwood.

Nurse! Nurse! I think our ad team just died on the spot! Help! Seriously, Paul, apart from the suicidal implications of such a move for AP itself, I don't think it would help much.

The fact is, you see, that plenty of people have suggested that software houses drop their prices and hopefully increase sales for years and years – many of them leading lights of the software industry themselves. The fact is, you see, that games are too expensive, and if we're to grow to the size of the music or film industries they need to drop to something around £15. At the same time though, many of the big softies are making a lot less money than you may think and would risk going bust if they tried it.

So where does that leave us? Well, hoping for an industry-wide initiative where everybody takes a deep breath and drops their prices at once, I guess – though I don't see that happening for a minute. In the meantime, you don't need us to tell you to boycott someone if you don't think they're providing value for money – just don't buy a game if you think it's not worth it. The software houses will soon get the message – they may not drop their prices, but they might start producing better games to justify £25/30/whatever.

'PROFESSIONAL VIEWS'

Dear AP,
I am currently sitting Higher Computing in school, and as part of this we are required to do an investigation. I decided to do it on software piracy. Without boring you too much, I was hoping you could give me your views on the subject and answer some of the questions I've listed at the bottom of the page. The investigation requires professional views and I thought, 'Look no further than AP!' Anyway, here are the questions:

1. How do you think software piracy affects the market?
2. If this problem is/isn't stopped, what do you think the software market will be like in the future?
3. How does this problem affect you?
4. How do you think other programmers and publishers will benefit from this being stopped?
5. Is software piracy good in any way for the market?
6. How do you see software piracy being stopped?

Yours hopefully, T Traynor, John Paul Academy, Summerston.

Here goes...
1. Pretty obvious one, this. Software piracy adversely affects the amount of money made by software houses from every game they release, which means they've got less money to invest in new products. One side effect of this is that because of piracy you're unlikely to ever see prices come down – at least on floppy disk products (as opposed to console cartridge or new Amiga A600 smart card games, which are much harder to copy). More piracy, less money in the industry, simple as that.
2. The obvious precedent is the 8-bit market, where full-price software is now almost completely non-existent and budget games and re-releases dominate totally. This is what could easily happen to the Amiga market too – though not for a number of years yet – if software houses continue to look to consoles as a haven for piracy-free games publishing. Let's hope it doesn't, eh?
3. No Amiga games, no AMIGA POWER.
4. See answer 1. More money in the industry attracts more programming talent, more programming talent hopefully means better games, better games mean more money, more money attracts more programming talent...
5. There is an argument that says that it is – that if someone's got a pirate copy of a game and played it and liked it, they may go out and buy the original just to get the manual/box or to feel good about having the 'real' thing. In other words, they'd work the same way as the demos of new games you get on the disk of AMIGA POWER. Me, I think it's complete rubbish, but there you go.

However, on a slightly different tack, there is a very strong argument for saying that producers of crap games damage the industry by passively encouraging piracy. If crap games disillusion buyers to the point where they're extremely reluctant to get their fingers burned splashing out £26 upwards on a game ever again, they're likely to turn to pirates/piracy as a way of getting games but risking less. Worth thinking about anyway.
6. Back to answer 2 here. The answer almost certainly lies with cartridge and CD formats which are a lot harder (though not impossible) to pirate than floppy disks. The Amiga 600 is a step in the right direction here, though whether the Amiga can find a niche for itself in the face of competition from the consoles on one side and PCs on the other remains to be seen.
Phew. Good luck in the exam.

And that's all we've got room for this month, chums. 'Oh No, Even More Lemmings' should put in an appearance next time, but until then, have fun and keep those interesting letters coming.

One thing, though. We seem to be getting an increasing volume of mail from people with problems with printers, monitors, word processing packages, DPaint IV and all manner of stuff, frequently accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. Unfortunately our Amiga technical/serious application knowledge is limited to knowing where you plug in the joystick – we can't be any help to you on those scores at all, so please don't waste expensive stamps on us (we just use them to send postcards to the office when we go on holiday).

Unfortunately that goes for pretty much all other personal correspondence too – we love to hear from you, but we simply don't have the time to reply to letters individually, much as we'd like to, so save 'please reply to me' stamps and write to your granny or something instead – you know how much she'd love to hear from you. Until next time, then, je ne sais pas pourquoi... ●

AND ANOTHER THING...

• In a desperate attempt to get his letter printed, Josh Addison of Cricklewood (probably) tried writing in precis form, viz: 'Ahem. Naff, crap, *Rainbow Islands*, why oh why, Stuart N Hardy'. Well, I guess it *sort of* worked, Josh.

• Keith Pointon of Letchworth just wants us to know that '*Skaermtrolden Hugo*' (a Danish 'PD' game from issue 12 – but see the news pages this month) translates as 'Hugo the screen troll' or 'Hugo the troll on the screen'. Thanks, Keith.

• Matteh Donovan and Damien Scully want to know if it's okay to use the PD games from AMIGA POWER coverdisks in a PD library they're going to set up.

The answer, of course, is yes – they're public domain, which means, by definition, that anyone can do anything the like with them, more or less – as long as you don't alter the programs in any way and always include any documentation files which accompany them. However, as for the game demos on our disks, no you can't – they're copyright to the software house who supplied them and AMIGA POWER. If you really want to use one of them you could try getting permission from the publisher – they may not mind – but don't do anything unless you've got it in writing that you can, okay?

• Jonathan Park of Ottery St Mary (what?) wants to know what the best football game at budget price is. Easy one, Jonathan, you want *Kick Off + Extra Time*, on the Hot Shots label at a very reasonable £7.99.

• Mr D Fulton of South Ockendon can't find *Zany Golf* anywhere. We're not surprised – it's almost impossible to get hold of – but try giving Electronic Arts a call on 0753 549442. It may just be that they'll be able to help.

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ABANDONED PLACES
Electronic Zoo £29.99

Uppers – Simply massive – almost certainly the biggest role playing game yet, with (at least) three times as much ground to cover as *Eye Of The Beholder*. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics, stilted animation and – if you're the owner of a single-drive Amiga – there's too much disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – With a bit more finesse it could have been a real winner. As it stands, a worthy and undeniably good value adventure game. Who says size isn't everything? ★★★★

ADVANTAGE TENNIS
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Well, the animation is fairly fluid, and tennis always has potential for great two-player fun. ***Downers*** – Poor controls leave the game frustrating in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – Has its moments, but frustrating and a tad dull. ★★★

THE ADVENTURES OF WILLY BEAMISH
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Great fun with neat graphics and plot. Adults will relish the chance to go back and be naughty at school. ***Downers*** – Interaction is limited and it's all so damn linear. ***The Bottom Line*** – Kind of fun, but at £35 a throw you really want a bit more. ★★★

AFRIKA KORPS
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Intelligent opponents set it apart from the standard wargame. ***Downers*** – But not enough to give it any flair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just because it's a wargame, it doesn't mean it has to be this primitive. ★

AGONY
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Absolutely lovely in every way, *Agony* could well be the first mellow shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – There are only six levels and the in-game music is nauseous. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's not the most demanding shoot-'em-up we've come across but it's among the most relaxing, and enjoyable. ★★★★

AH37-M THUNDERHAWK
Core £30.99

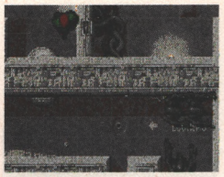
Uppers – The fastest, slickest 3D graphics yet to grace the Amiga. The arcade approach makes things much easier to get to grips with. ***Downers*** – The lack of real sim elements may put some off, and the mouse control is a bit unwieldy. ***The Bottom Line*** – A brilliantly executed arcade-simulation crossover, which captures the frenetic helicopter feel quite excellently. ★★★★★

ALCATRAZ
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Two-player fun with the unusual task of breaking INTO Alcatraz. ***Downers*** –The game is not much fun in the one player mode, particularly with the cumbersome switching between the two team members. ***The Bottom Line*** – A smooth two-player beat-'em-up romp with brain cells, but a non-starter in one player mode. ★★★

ALIEN BREED
Team 17 £25.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and atmospheric *Gauntlet* variant, with lots of lovely touches, a two player mode, and a free *Pong* game!



Downers – Only six levels, and it's not the kind of game you're likely to come back to when you've finished it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a bad effort at all from the ex-PD boys, but maybe a little thin to last for long. ★★★★

ALIEN STORM
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – *Golden Axe* given a futuristic sci-fi scenario. ***Downers*** – The elements of playability which made *Golden Axe* so great are missing from this one. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically adept, but sorely lacking in every other respect ★★

ALTERED DESTINY
Accolade £29.99

Uppers – An absorbing adventure in true American style. ***Downers*** – It's not really anything new, and it sure isn't up to Lucasfilm standards. ***The Bottom Line*** – You could do worse, but you could certainly do better. ★★★

AMNIOS
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Another old Williams arcade classic gets dusted down and re-interpreted (this time it's *Sinistar*). ***Downers*** – It's already been done better (if not as lavishly) by the under-rated *Photon Storm*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good for an occasional blast. ★★★

ANOTHER WORLD
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Near perfect graphics and some truly breathtaking setpieces. This really is the state of the art in arcade adventures. ***Downers*** – The frustration level rises to health-risk level at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a true classic, but destined to become a landmark. ★★★★★

APIDYA
Playbyte £25.99

Uppers – An utterly brilliant shoot-'em-up, with graphics and a soundtrack that are imaginatively and professionally executed. ***Downers*** – Busy graphic backgrounds make things a little confusing at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderfully satisfying blast. The shoot-'em-up renaissance starts here. ★★★★★

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Lots of tanks, lots of planes, lots of places to go. It's deep and wide and tall. Months of playing time for those with the patience. ***Downers*** – Takes a lot of self-discipline to play properly. ***The Bottom Line*** – A natural successor to *Carrier Command*. ★★★★

ARMALYTE
Thalamus £25.99

Uppers – Enjoyable in an old-fashioned sort of way. ***Downers*** – Sloppy presentation and inadequate design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Totally eclipsed by Activision's *R-Type II*. ★★

ARNHEM
CCS £19.95

Uppers – A 8-bit classic wargame finally brought to Amiga owners. ***Downers*** – ...but nobody really wanted it anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Primitive beyond belief – even wargamers should give it a wide berth. ★

A-10 TANK KILLER
Dynamix (Sierra) £35.75

Uppers – A wealth of typical flight sim-style detail. ***Downers*** – Gameplay suffers due to the sluggish frame rate and lack of a real flying 'feel'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A interesting but flawed attempt at taking the flight simulation genre a stage further. ★★★

A320 AIRBUS
Thalion £29.99

Uppers – Authentic sound and graphics make this a simulation that true aviation buffs will be happy with. ***Downers*** – The manual is a mess and lets the game down, particularly as you need something comprehensive for a sim such as this. And let's be honest, the idea of flying an Airbus is something of a minority thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Impressive in its attempts at authenticity, but it's strictly for aviation buffs and certainly no light entertainment. ★★★

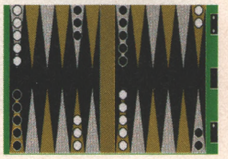
ATOMINO
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – An easy to pick up and very slick puzzle game, with thousands of levels to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Can covalent bonding be fun? We're not sure. Rather samey; very tough; crap music. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slightly similar to *Pipe Mania* in some ways – if you liked that, then try this one for size. ★★★

BABY JO
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Sweet *Mario*-influenced game with barrels of cuteness and lots of simple fun. ***Downers*** – Death by full nappy – yeuch! ***The Bottom Line*** – Kind of lovable and entertaining, if technically just a little bit on the crap side. Overpriced for what it is, though. ★★

BACKGAMMON ROYALE
Oxford Softworks £19.99



Uppers – Well, it does look a bit like the real board game. ***Downers*** – Backgammon's simple rules are badly explained in a terrible instruction manual. And anyway, is this really a suitable subject for a computer game? ***The Bottom Line*** – All the bits are there but it seems a little pointless. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Based on the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

BARBARIAN 2
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – It looks good and there's a generous measure of senseless brutality and fantasy atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Very repetitive and very shallow in the gameplay stakes. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Shadow Of The Beast* fans will love it. ★★★

BATTLE CHESS II – CHINESE CHESS
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Cute graphics, and a new angle on the chess theme. ***Downers*** – The animations soon become tiresome, and Chinese chess isn't half as interesting as the standard game anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good as a showpiece game, but a failure as a piece of playable software. ★★

BATTLE ISLE
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – A strategy wargame that's easy to get to grips with. Looks lovely, and the intro sequence

It's back, back, back! (Oh, alright then, it never actually went away.) It's The Bottom Line, Britain's biggest and – hey! – bestest guide to the vast back catalogue of old Amiga games, and in particular the ones that have been released over the past year. This month, thrill to new entries like *Castles, Project X, Apidya, Ultima VI, Agony* and *Pacific Islands* – at least a couple of which are going to go down in the annals of Amiga gaming as real all-time classics – and groan at utter no-hopers like *Fireteam 2200* or *Cover Girl Poker*. All Amiga gaming life is here, from the highest to the low. Whatever it is you want to know, this is the first place to be. Now read on...

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

is even funny. ***Downers*** – Disk access at every turn and combat which seems to be random are a pain. ***The Bottom Line*** – An enormously promising and brave idea which hasn't quite come off successfully. ★★★★

BEAST BUSTERS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Graphically close to the original arcade version. ***Downers*** – Tends to slow down when there's a lot happening on screen, and it's far too easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't really compare too well with all the other *Op Wolf* games on the Amiga. ★★

BIG BUSINESS
Magic Bytes £25.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and a fairly original concept. Would you believe, a 'humorous business simulation'? ***Downers*** – It's true, though the humour is feeble-witted stereotyping, and the business part is tedious number-crunching. ***The Bottom Line*** – Some nice touches, but at the end of the day it just isn't any fun to play at all. ★★

BIG RUN
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Everything you could reasonably expect of a motor racing coin-op conversion is flawlessly rendered in this rather old fashioned rolling road effort. ***Downers*** – Well, can you think of anything new it has to offer? A tedious lack of scope and variety. ***The Bottom Line*** – Extremely basic gameplay and over-familiar graphics make this pretty dull going. ★★

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
Capstone (Accolade) £24.99

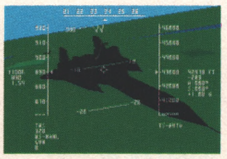
Uppers – In our humble opinion, a most excellent subject for a licence. The game even manages to capture some of the flavour of the bodacious film too. ***Downers*** – But that doesn't stop it being a strong contender for the 'Weakest Gameplay In The World' award. ***The Bottom Line*** – Something of a missed opportunity. Let's hope for better things from the game of the film sequel. ★★

BILLIARDS II SIMULATOR
Infogrames £25.99

Uppers – Plenty of variations, including a 'crazy pool' with an octagonal table. ***Downers*** – Neither the 2D or 3D modes allow a decent shot to be made, and the 'feel' of the sport is lost completely. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another game which crumbles in the face of its competition, this time in the form of *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*. ★★

BIRDS OF PREY
Electronic Arts £34.99

Uppers – Phenomenally comprehensive. A wider choice of aircraft than every flight sim ever put



together. ***Downers*** – The screen update is excruciatingly jerky. The controls are as unrealistic as ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most complex flight sim to date. Virtually guaranteed to hold your attention for months. ★★★★

BLACK CRYPT
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Nicely-presented hack-and-slash role-playing with a strong feeling of progression. ***Downers*** – Artistically and atmospherically this game offers absolutely nothing new. ***The Bottom Line*** – Although seemingly quite ordinary, there's something about it which just clicks, making it an enjoyable slice of FRP. ★★★★

BLADE WARRIOR
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Pretty breathtaking graphics, with plenty of action and puzzling too. ***Downers*** – The gameplay is unlikely to be to everyone's taste. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the most atmospheric game ever. ★★★★

BLUE MAX
Mindscape £34.99

Uppers – Less techie than most flying thangs. Some rather spiffing sound compliments the WWI feel nicely. ***Downers*** – Not a winner in the user-friendliness stakes, and the slow and sloppy main game never (ahem) really takes off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull. *Not* the definitive bi-plane game for Biggles buffs it should have been. ★

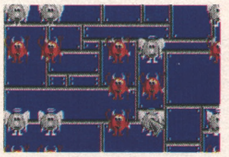
THE BLUES BROTHERS
Titus £25.99

Uppers – A wonderfully presented platformer that's so playable its frightening. And it's funny too. ***Downers*** – The two player mode is a wasted opportunity. ***The Bottom Line*** – Probably the best character licence ever to appear on the Amiga. ★★★★

BONANZA BROS
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – An original(ish) theme complemented by a unique and interesting visual approach. ***Downers*** – What's there is a right laugh, but only for a limited (and rather samey) 10 scenarios. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stylish, and good two player fun, but lacking longevity. ★★★★

BOOLY
Loriciels £19.99

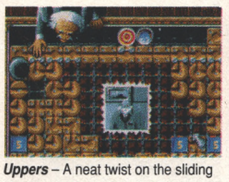


Uppers – More novel than the average puzzler, and an interesting blend of logic, tactics and luck. ***Downers*** – Possibly requires too much self-discipline to play properly for most people. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fascinating and moderately entertaining, but it's always going to be a minority-appeal kind of thing. ★★★

BOROBODUR
Thalamus £25.99

Uppers – The graphics aren't bad, if a little crude, and some of the problem solving does at least tax the brain. ***Downers*** – It isn't the worst game ever seen at AMIGA POWER, but we're not that far away here, really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Half-hearted. ★

BOSTON BOMB CLUB
Silmarils £25.99



Uppers – A neat twist on the sliding block type of puzzle game. ***Downers*** – It hasn't got the longest game life ever, and the basic concept won't exactly light everybody's fire. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the better puzzlers we've seen lately. Pleasing, fun and very French. ★★★★

BRAIN BLASTERS
Ubi Soft £25.99

Uppers – Well, there's a simultaneous two player mode. ***Downers*** – But it's only really remotely playable when played solo. ***The Bottom Line*** – A sad, simplistic and ineffective puzzler. ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2 (ENHANCED)
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – A strategy role-playing game done the old-fashioned (and playable) way. ***Downers*** – It's nothing new and it doesn't exactly look modern. ***The Bottom Line*** – Surprisingly deep and fun. ★★★

BRIDES OF DRACULA
Gonzo Games £25.99

Uppers – There's a fair amount of humour (some intentional, some not) as you go through your vamp paces ***Downers*** – Amateurish graphics and the whole game is a plodding affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Humorous vampire antics do not a great game make, especially when it all boils down to a tediously slow split screen race. ★★★

BRIGADE COMMANDER
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Desert Storm scenarios give it a nice touch of topicality. ***Downers*** – The usual crap graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Friendlier than the average wargame, and more playable too. ★★★

BUILDERLAND
Loriciels £24.99

Uppers – Interesting and cute *Lemmings* derivative. ***Downers*** – It's written in AMOS, and it shows. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but it's a shame they couldn't have programmed it properly. ★★

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF
Renegade £16.99

Uppers – A wonderful add-on for fans of the first *Cadaver*. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use for anyone else though. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the original, this isn't such a bad price to pay for more of the same. ★★★

CAPTAIN PLANET
Mindscape £25.99

Uppers – Um, it's ideologically sound. And the colours are nice. ***Downers*** – Terminally flawed gameplay, and seems to have been put together in a terrible hurry. ***The Bottom Line*** – No fun to play at all. Forget it. ★★

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably captivating and accessible strategy. ***Downers*** – Ridiculous arcade sequence dropped slap bang in the middle of the game almost totally destroys the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Alarmingly stupid design blows what could have been a winner. ★★

CARDIAXX
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – A shoot-'em-up with the added ingredients of (a lorra, lorra) speed and a score bar right in the middle of the play area. ***Downers*** – Beyond these 'features' there's not really anything special about *Cardiaxx* at all. ***The Bottom Line*** – Its heart's in the right place, but its playability hasn't turned up to the party. ★

CASTLES
Interplay £29.99

Uppers – Potentially fun in a *Sim City* sort of way. ***Downers*** – Tedious time consuming planning can all too easily result in failure with this one. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Castles* sounds fun but falls somewhat between two stools. Not enough real gameplay and it lacks realism. ★★

CELTIC LEGENDS
Ubi Soft £30.99

Uppers – Plenty of strategy plus plenty of action plus good presentation make for a more than passable role-playing challenge. ***Downers*** – The ponderous computer opponent won't break any speed records. ***The Bottom Line*** – More than enough brainstorming and hack'n'slay to keep you in jollies for ages. ★★★★★

CHALLENGE GOLF
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and up to four players catered for. ***Downers*** – Mind-numbingly unrealistic putting sequence, and loads of unnecessary little bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lack of playability makes this a seriously below-par golf sim. Go for *PGA Tour Golf* instead. ★

CHAMPION DRIVER
Idea £25.99

Uppers – An overhead racing game which knows its limitations, and works splendidly within them. ***Downers*** – Less frills than a frill-less thing, and isn't this a high price for this sort of thing? ***The Bottom Line*** – Very fast and slick racer, which lacks longeivity. ★★★

CHAMPION OF THE RAJ
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Arcade sequences break up the heavy-duty strategy action. ***Downers*** – Even more ridiculous disk accessing than usual in this type of game. Crap programming generally. ***The Bottom Line*** – Potentially good game ruined by complete lack of playability. ★

CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA
On-Line £24.99

Uppers – Lots of character interaction and plenty to do. ***Downers*** – Crap fight sequences and tiny graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enjoyable *Ultima*-style adventure slightly spoiled by sloppy programming. Still good fun though. ★★★

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – Visually impressive wargame, with instant appeal and plenty of user-friendly presentation. ***Downers*** – Things fall down in the wargaming aspect of things, with some rather silly rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very brave try, but it doesn't quite reach the heights to which it aspires. ★★★

CHE: GUERILLA IN BOLIVIA
CCS £25.99

Uppers – The first Che licence we've seen. ***Downers*** – A lethally average wargame. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only undemanding absolute beginners need apply. ★★

CHESS CHAMPION 2175
The Oxford Softworks £19.99

Uppers – You can learn a lot from this intuitive chess game – and have fun at the same time! Perhaps the best chess game yet. ***Downers*** – The endless gameplay options may swamp the beginner. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Chess Champ* offers a level of brain burn you'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere, even down at the local chess club. ★★★★

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – A first class caveman romp, with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and the obligatory load of external views. There's even the opportunity to fly the Space Shuttle. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put a damper on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CISCO HEAT
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – A fun driving game in the *OutRun* style, with hills and junctions giving it a bit of originality. ***Downers*** – Not even slightly close to the coin-op, and the control system is abominable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far

too short to provide a decent amount of enjoyment. ★★★

COHORT
Impressions £29.99

Uppers – (Relatively) excellent graphics and helpful user-interface make things accessible. ***Downers*** – The control system isn't as good as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine off-beat wargame, but overpriced. ★★

CONFLICT MIDDLE EAST
SSI/US Gold £30.99

Uppers – A wargame in the traditional sense, but surprisingly it's executed very well indeed. ***Downers*** – The wargame label is no longer a valid excuse for an Amiga program looking as dated as this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Of limited interest, even to hardened wargamers. ★★★

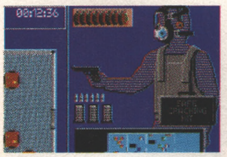
COUGAR FORCE
Tomahawk £19.99

Uppers – The box is quite interesting (actually that's a bit of a lie). ***Downers*** – Everything. The sound, the graphics, the gameplay – all dire in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – A perfect present for pyromaniacs. ★

COVER GIRL POKER
Emotional Pictures £25.99

Uppers – Alrightish presentation. ***Downers*** – Some of the pictures are unfocussed and what animation there is, is poor. The poker tactics are almost non-existent. ***The Bottom Line*** – There are much cheaper ways of seeing girls with their clothes off. Sad, Sad, Sad. ★

COVERT ACTION
MicroProse £34.99



Uppers – Lots of atmosphere and some excellent sub-games. ***Downers*** – Could have been better programmed, could have had much better controls, and could have been £10 cheaper. ***The Bottom Line*** – Surprisingly playable and enjoyable – with just a little more user-friendliness this would have been an absolute classic. ★★★

CRIME CITY
IF... £25.99

Uppers – The basic scenario of this private eye mystery does have potential as an adventure game. ***Downers*** – But the finished thing fails to generate any involvement or

emotion. It comes across as if it was written by a child. ***The Bottom Line*** – Computerised interactive fiction lives or dies by its interface and its storyline, and *Crime City*'s lousy in both respects. ★

CRIME DOES NOT PAY
Titus £25.95

Uppers – Er... reasonable(ish) graphics? ***Downers*** – Terrible gameplay, pathetic humour, atrocious design, useless plot... shall we go on? I think not. ***The Bottom Line*** – Crime doesn't pay. This game is a software crime, so work it out for yourself. ★

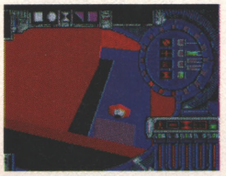
CRIME TIME
Starbyte £25.99

Uppers – A German adventure with the added bonus of... graphics! ***Downers*** – But not very good ones, and the rest of the game is a little on the trashy side. ***The Bottom Line*** – A hideously dated, unoriginal adventure. ★

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE
Delphine/US Gold £27.99

Uppers – Superbly-designed plot, lovely graphics, and the usual compulsive quality you expect from Delphine. ***Downers*** – Loads (and loads) of disk-accessing, and even when you've got the solution it seemingly takes eight hours to play it through to the end. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not flawless, but still an absolutely lovely game, and a worthy companion to *Monkey Island*. ★★★★

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99



Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers*** – Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DARKMAN
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – The driving section is imaginative and fun. ***Downers*** – Everything else is hackneyed, licence-by-numbers rubbish. Ocean really ought to know better than to release this kind of product. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not quite as bad as *Total Recall* and *Nightbreed*, but not very much better either. The worst film game for quite some time. ★★

DAS BOOT
Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The 2nd most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers*** – ...but that still doesn't make it particularly accessible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Playable, but overpriced. If you've already got *SS II*, then this is the next one to go for (assuming you fancy another sub game). ★★★

DEATHBRINGER
Empire £25.99

Uppers – Stunning parallax scrolling, plenty of tongue-in-cheek action and a wonderfully camp hero. ***Downers*** – Shallow hack'n'slash gameplay and dodgy collision detection. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not a lot of entertainment for a full-price game. ★★★

DEATH KNIGHTS OF KRYNN
SSI/US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A great improvement on the previous 'Krynn' role-players. ***Downers*** – But compared to the mighty *Eye Of The Beholder*, this is very average indeed. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough product, but nothing very spectacular. ★★★

DINO WARS
Magic Bytes £25.99

Uppers – A novel chess variant, including a great 'two players at once' option where you don't have to wait for the other player to move. ***Downers*** – The central beat-'em-up section is a bit crap, and the game as a whole is over-simplistic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice idea, but asking £25 for it is a bit of a cheek – there just isn't enough to it. ★★

DISCOVERY
Micro Illusions £25.99

Uppers – Good graphics for an educational game. ***Downers*** – For something which relies so heavily on speech synthesis, the speech quality is terrible. ***The Bottom Line*** – Tricky to play and educationally dubious, this is a bit of a flop. ★★

DOUBLE DRAGON III
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Give us a minute, we'll think of something. ***Downers*** – A very bad example of a very tired genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – The beat-'em-up done just how it shouldn't be. ★

DRAGON FIGHTER
Idea £25.99

Uppers – An unusual mixture of scrolling shoot-'em-up and strategy-ish bits. ***Downers*** – The strategy bits just get in the way, and the arcade bit hasn't been done justice. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick, but insubstantial. ★★

DYNA BLASTER/ BOMBERMAN
Ubi Soft £30.99

Uppers – Sweet, simple arcade fun in true console style – good as a one player game, brilliant in exciting simultaneous five (yes, five!) player mode (if you can crush that many people around your Amiga). ***Downers*** – It's a bit too expensive

for our liking (mainly due to the joystick adaptor included). ***The Bottom Line*** – A very addictive maze-based *PacMan* variant, improved dramatically by the joystick adaptor. ★★★★★

ELF
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – An excellent arcade adventure romp, with enough interesting little extras to make it fresh. ***Downers*** – These things are getting just a little bit old-fashioned, aren't they? ***The Bottom Line*** – A good solid game from the Ocean stable, but not a world beater. ★★★★

ELVIRA – THE ARCADE GAME
Flair £25.99

Uppers – A highly polished arcade adventure that's a real joy to play. ***Downers*** – There's no innovation or gameplay surprise here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fine example of a tried'n'trusted formula. ★★★★

ELVIRA II: THE JAWS OF CEREBUS
Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Nice graphics. ***Downers*** – Too many disks, a dull storyline, and a lack of gameplay – all the faults of the original *Elvira* rear their ugly head once again. ***The Bottom Line*** – Frustrating, tedious and vastly overpriced. ★★

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – A surprisingly involving footy strategy thing in the *Football Manager* vein. ***Downers*** – They're not still making these things are they? (Yes they are). ***The Bottom Line*** – A dated idea – it sounds tedious but it's actually executed quite commendably. ★★

EXILE
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. ***Downers*** – Rather primitive graphics, and not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great arcade adventure, but it might not be your cup of tea if you're an action fan. Voted AMIGA POWER reviewers game of the year! ★★★★★

THE EXECUTIONER
Hawk £25.99

Uppers – A playable enough *Thrust*-variant, with one or two extra bits tacked on (such as the tasteful torture scenes). ***Downers*** – The core of the game just isn't exciting or different enough to give *The Executioner* that 'one more go' appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine if you don't mind the slightly repetitive gameplay. ★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers*** – Despite being better than *DM*, it's not as different as it should have been. There's still room for improvement in the D&D genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best trrue D&D games for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else.) ★★★★★

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Graphics to make you gasp, sound effects to get your adrenalin pumping and gameplay to leave you in a quivering heap on the floor. ***Downers*** – Despite the shoot-'em-up nature of things, it can all be a touch too much for the less ambitious games player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the last word in flight sims (so far, anyway). ★★★★★

FACE OFF
Anco £25.99

Uppers – Reasonable graphics, some nice attention to detail and fairly realistic player movement. ***Downers*** – Not the game to show just how good ice hockey can be on the Amiga. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very average game, but we've yet to see any other better ice hockey efforts. ★★

FALLING JEWELS
Soft & Easy £25.99

Uppers – A nice variation on the *Klax* and *Tetris* themes. ***Downers*** – Awful exterior. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd not be badly advised to take a tumble with *Falling Jewels*. ★★★

FANTASTIC VOYAGE
Centaur £25.99

Uppers – A simple, methodical shoot-'em-up, but one with highly atmospheric graphics.

Downers – Not very hectic, and not surprising in the least. ***The Bottom Line*** – Deserves to do well. ★★★

FATE – GATES OF DAWN
Rainbow Arts £29.99

Uppers – 'Unbelievably horny women', unusual presentation and more to do than some so-called RPG games. ***Downers*** – Fiddly control and tatty presentation. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just another FRPG really, but with enough character to make it worthwhile. Far from essential though. ★★★

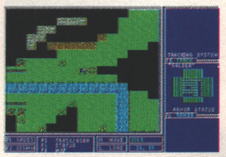
FINAL BLOW
Storm £25.99

Uppers – A pretty close conversion of the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Which was an absolute duffer in the first place. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best boxing game around (and just look at the competition!) ★

FINAL FIGHT
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – Context-sensitive controls, huge sprites, arcade-true graphics, generally an excellent conversion. ***Downers*** – Then again it's a conversion of a fairly dull, and quite dated, formulaic coin-op. And the beat-'em-up is looking a little long in the tooth these days. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically impressive and loads of fun to play, this might even knock the famous *IK+* off its 'best Amiga beat-'em-up' perch. (But then again it might not). ★★★★

FIRETEAM 2200
Internecine £29.99



Uppers – Well, it makes a Party Political Broadcast look mesmerising. ***Downers*** – It makes a Party Political Broadcast look mesmerising! ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, dull and ugly. Avoid. ★

FIRST SAMURAI
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Stunningly well-programmed, imaginative design and inspired use of sound, all added to a classic and proven gameplay style. ***Downers*** – Maybe just a little on the slow side. ***The Bottom Line*** –

Simply gorgeous arcade adventure that you really shouldn't be without. ★★★★★

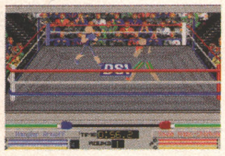
FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II
D&H £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably complex and wide-ranging strategy bash. ***Downers*** – £25 for a footie management game? Get real. ***The Bottom Line*** – Adds nothing new to the decades-old number-crunching of every other football manager game ever. ★★

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Breathtakingly detailed 3D and the finest driving feel yet seen on the Amiga. ***Downers*** – The prospect of such an accurate Grand Prix simulation isn't going to appeal to everyone. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best racing game we've ever seen, and possibly the best game to appear on the Amiga. ★★★★★

4D SPORTS BOXING
Mindscape £25.99



Uppers – The best boxing game yet, with some highly original polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Slower than you could possibly imagine, with an over-complex control system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unusual, but not actually very playable. ★★

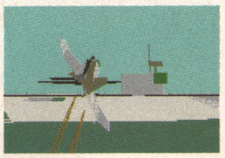
4D SPORTS DRIVING
Mindscape £25.99

Uppers – It's quite fun and visually impressive, with the 3D graphics fast enough to keep you on your toes. ***Downers*** – It won't keep you enthralled for very long at the end of the day. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great for fans of the genre, but learner drivers would probably be wise to avoid. ★★

FLAMES OF FREEDOM – MIDWINTER II
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – There's loads to do, and the whole thing looks lovely. Hours of fun to be had from the character-designing section alone. ***Downers*** – Lots of stupid holes in the logic, and an uncomfortable balance between the strategy and action aspects. ***The Bottom Line*** – Works better in theory than in practice. *Midwinter* fans will love it, but the rest of us are likely to get very bored very quickly. ★★★★

FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER
Image Works £30.99

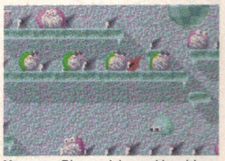


Uppers – Highly realistic and flexible (you can make it almost as simple as you want), and decent graphics too. ***Downers*** – It's not immediately attractive by any means, and the controls are even more forbidding than usual. Bugged, too. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not technically amazing, but absorbing and entertaining, with a neat two-player link-up game. ★★★★

FRENETIC
Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Fast and good-looking. ***Downers*** – You've seen this all before, and done rather more excitingly into the bargain. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slick programming only serves to make *Frenetic* tedious in a professional kind of a way. ★★

FUZZBALL
System 3 £19.99



Uppers – Big, squishy and lovable – *Fuzzball* begs to be played. Platform and puzzling styles make an intriguing cocktail. ***Downers*** – If only it was easier. Less viciousness would make all the difference. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but some irritating quirks of game design mean it falls well short of classic status. ★★★★

GAUNTLET III
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – A new angle on the arcade classic gives some novelty value, and makes proceedings sufficiently different this time around. ***Downers*** – The pace is ponderous, there aren't enough baddies, and the speech is badly missed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but it doesn't really live up to the legend that is *Gauntlet*. Give us a bash on *Gauntlet 2*, anyday. ★★★

GEISHA
Tomahawk £25.99

Uppers – Um, well, you *do* get to see some girls' bits. (Sorry, female readers). ***Downers*** – Tacky and fatuous 'plot', giving way to some of the most unplayable sub-games ever, with presentation of a kind that people used to get arrested for. A nightmare all round really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could this perhaps be the worst full-price game ever reviewed in AMIGA POWER? A five percent mark would seem to suggest so... ★

GEM'X
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers*** – Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best puzzle games to date. ★★★★

GERM CRAZY
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Not quite as expensive as Mindscape's *Life & Death*. ***Downers*** – But with little else in its favour. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another half-baked idea, not followed through properly. (Where do they all come from?) ★

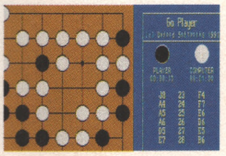
GHOST BATTLE
Thalion £25.53

Uppers – The sound's quite good and the graphics are okay. ***Downers*** – Everything else is utterly awful. ***The Bottom Line*** – Badly-designed and executed *Ghosts'n'Goblins* clone that's so bad it's scary. ★

GLOBAL EFFECT
Millennium £29.99

Uppers – Great if you feel your social conscience needs exercising. ***Downers*** – It just doesn't hang together and suffers from very awkward gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – File under interesting failures. ★★★

GO
Oxford Softworks £19.99



Uppers – A reasonably well-justified conversion of ancient oriental strategy board game. ***Downers*** – Despite being one meg only, doesn't dress things up to any noticeable extent. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the most enjoyable and absorbing board games conversions yet seen, and at a sensible price too. ★★★★

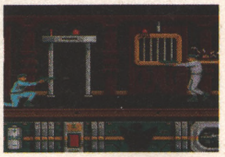
THE GODFATHER
US Gold £30.99

Uppers – Lovely to look at with plenty of good animation and rather lovely sound effects. ***Downers*** – Beneath it all it's a tedious old *RoboCop* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Slack and dull and lacking in challenge. Avoid. ★★

GODS
Renegade £25.53

Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers*** – Not quite as good as it's made out to be. And those graphics are far too clever for their own good. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★

GOLDEN EAGLE
Loriciel £28.99

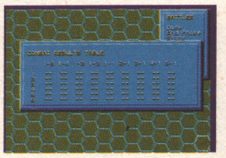


Uppers – Nice character animation, and a suitably French price. ***Downers*** – There's no gameplay to speak of. ***The Bottom Line*** – Uninspired, uninnovative, uninteresting, and unaddictive. ★★

GRAEME SOUNESS VECTOR SOCCER
Impulze £25.99

Uppers – Innovative use of 3D graphics and some pretty spectacular replays. ***Downers*** – It just doesn't work as a game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Plays kind of like Gazza with both his knees knackered. ★★

GREAT NAPOLEONIC BATTLES
Impressions £29.99



Uppers – Well, it includes a wargame editor – so the fun need never end. ***Downers*** – The wargame part is actually very average indeed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Worth buying for the editor, if you're really into that sort of thing. ★★★

GUNBOAT
Accolade £29.99

Uppers – A sim which actually does something different. ***Downers*** – The action doesn't really convey enough excitement, and the graphics are a little on the primitive side. ***Bottom Line*** – A highly complex sim, this takes quite some time to get drawn into. ★★★

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
Kingsoft £25.99

Uppers – A good rendition of the Hagar character, and an engaging enough game behind the licence. ***Downers*** – It's not really any better than Hi-Tec's *Scooby & Scrabby* (which is a helluvalot cheaper). ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad at all. But nothing very spectacular either. ★★

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Almost unlimited lastability, thanks to the huge numbers of scenarios. ***Downers*** – Off-puttingly complicated, and offers nothing new to the unconverted. ***Bottom Line*** – Well put together, but still strictly for diehards. ★★

HARE RAISING HAVOC
Disney £25.99

Uppers – The best game with genuine cartoon-quality graphics yet.

Downers – But still not a great game – its flaws are repetitive, frustrating and disappointing. ***The Bottom Line*** – The fun lies in the experience of the whole thing, but the gameplay is very limited. Not really recommended. ★★

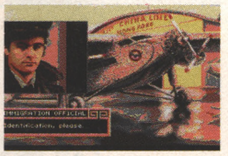
HARLEQUIN
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Humdinging platform game. Beautiful graphics, exquisite gameplay, loads of depth, and it's positively brimming with imagination. Well presented too. ***Downers*** – The size of the task may be too much for the weak willed. (Some downer, huh?) ***The Bottom Line*** –The more you play this game the better it gets. A classic. ★★★★★

HARPOON (WITH BATTLESET 2)
Electronic Arts £34.99

Uppers – Realistic, incredibly detailed naval wargame with specifications and performance figures all over the place. ***Downers*** – As you might expect, it's poorly presented, and terribly slow. Put aside plenty of time for manual studying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lots of boating fun, but too expensive and badly programmed for anyone other than a real enthusiast. ★★★

HEARTS OF CHINA
Sierra £34.99



Uppers – Beautiful painted backdrops, with enough relevance and animation to make them justifiable, and a pretty sensible control system make it an enjoyable Far East romp. ***Downers*** – Lack of speed and the need for one meg and a hard drive, plus a lack of real plot flexibility. ***The Bottom Line*** – Sierra are carving themselves a niche with this sort of thing. Neat. ★★★★

HEIMDALL
Core Design £30.99

Uppers – Stunningly pretty and atmospheric, and it's absolutely enormous too. The cartoon-style is just gorgeous. ***Downers*** – Some nasty disk swapping and accessing, though not quite to Cinemaware

'standards'. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fast-moving and slick RPG game that's miles more accessible than the genre usually is. A winner. ★★★★★

HERO QUEST
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HERO QUEST: RETURN OF THE WITCHLORD
Gremlin £14.99

Uppers – An add-on module for fans of the original *Hero Quest* who want to take their characters into harder territory. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use to anybody else, but that's a bit inevitable. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *Hero Quest*, then this is an obvious (and fairly inexpensive) purchase. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES
Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HOME ALONE
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – The box can be used for darts practice. ***Downers*** – Atrocious gameplay, jerky graphics and terrible sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – A ludicrously unenjoyable film licence. Don't disappoint yourself.★

HUDSON HAWK
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – A film licence which actually stands up as a game in its own right. ***Downers*** – The control system can reduce some to tears, and it doesn't match *The Blues Brothers* in the arcade adventure/platform stakes. ***The Bottom Line*** – A well produced, but infuriatingly difficult, game. Try before you buy. ★★★★

HUNTER
Activision £25.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D graphics and loads to do. ***Downers*** – The odd little graphical glitch or two. ***Bottom***

Line – Enormously absorbing game – you'll find yourself completely captivated by it for hours on end. ★★★★★

INDY HEAT
Storm £25.99

Uppers – Well, it's an alrightish conversion of this *Super Sprint*-style coin-op, speedy and playable. ***Downers*** – Little real depth though, and you can buy similar on budget. ***The Bottom Line*** – We can't really say anything great about it, but neither is it a complete waste of money or time. Best if you play it against a bunch of friends. ★★★

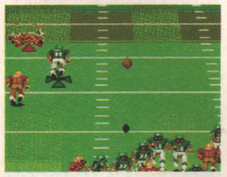
INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ATHLETICS
Hawk £25.99

Uppers – Tons of fun for those who miss the days of joystick waggling. ***Downers*** – Terrible presentation, and a highly questionable price. ***The Bottom Line*** – If only it had been a tenner cheaper... ★★★

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Stunning 3D camera-style view on the action, and the actual rules and physical mechanics of the game are re-created beautifully. It really is just like playing a game of snooker. (What more could you want from a snooker sim?) ***Downers*** – Well, it's still only snooker. Some extra stats would have been nice too. ***Bottom Line*** – A veritable corker. A classic. A 90 percenter. Need we say more? ★★★★★

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL
Electronic Arts £25.99



Uppers – Superb graphics and sound are merely the icing on the cake of a superbly thought out sports game – and one with enough (two player) variety to keep you going for years. One of the classic Amiga sports sims. ***Downers*** – The computer opponents soon prove to be a walkover, so in the long run enjoyment is limited to two-player action. Plenty of people can't grasp the basics of American Football either, and they're needed here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A near-perfect conversion of a game that was voted (in it's original console incarnation) 1990's 'videogame of the year'. It plays as good as it looks. ★★★★★

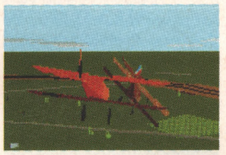
KID GLOVES 2
Millennium £25.99

Uppers – Ther're plenty of *Super Wonder Boy* influences in there. ***Downers*** – It's got nothing to do with the original *Kid Gloves*, and it's just no fun anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – A waste of a good name, and a very poor deal. ★★

KNIGHTMARE
Mindscape £30.99

Uppers – The *Captive* system given a more appropriate fantasy setting. More compact too. ***Downers*** – Not enough thought put into the concept, and the difficulty is pitched all wrong. ***The Bottom Line*** – It feels too much like role-playing by numbers. ★★★

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY
MicroProse £34.99



Uppers – Accessible and enjoyable to play, in a not-very-flight-simmy kind of way. ***Downers*** – Erm, well, there aren't quite as many buttons as some flight sims. ***The Bottom Line*** – Much more playable than you might expect, this is the surprise hit of the year in the AMIGA POWER office. ★★★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes. ★★★

KING'S BOUNTY
New World Computing £25.99

Uppers – Accessible and tidily presented, and far more playable for the non-expert than anything in this field we've seen. ***Downers*** – Nothing beyond the fact that some people won't ever get to grips with this sort of game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superb D&D-style adventure that's fun for everyone but the most narrow of mind. ★★★★

KING'S QUEST V
Sierra £39.99

Uppers – Beautiful digitised graphics and a very friendly point and click interface. ***Downers*** – The price is one obvious downside, and only hard drive owners should bother. ***The Bottom Line*** – A mighty impressive adventure, which takes Sierra to new heights. ★★★★

LAST NINJA 3
System 3 £25.99

Uppers – Polished presentation and big improvements in look, feel and plot in the ninja's third outing. ***Downers*** – A diabolical control system and one or two flaws in execution prove major irritations. ***The Bottom Line*** – For those who go for these beat-'em-up adventures, *Last Ninja 3* is heaven sent. Others will wish to give it a wide berth. ★★★★

LEANDER
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – Slice after mouthwatering slice of smooth platform action. A sizeable and endearing exercise in coolness. ***Downers*** – Shallow as hell. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately a limited romp, what it lacks in inspiration it makes up for in perspiration. ★★★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Well, it's got a jolly cocktail lounge-style soundtrack which sets off the sleaze quite well. ***Downers*** – The action is slow, the puzzles are illogical and it's all just very disappointing. Little real sex in it either. ***The Bottom Line*** – If it's titillation you want, buy the Sunday Sport. ★

LIFE AND DEATH
Mindscape £25.53

Uppers – Excellent packaging (the surgical mask and gloves are wild), and some fairly amusing gameplay keep things on the boil for a couple of hours. ***Downers*** – Repetition soon sets in – as a long-term challenge it all falls apart quite alarmingly. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is quite good, but there's just not enough of it. ★★

LIVING JIGSAWS
Miles Computing £24.99

Uppers – Likely to appeal to the younger Amiga users. ***Downers*** – Unlikely to appeal to anybody else, anywhere. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks any charm whatsoever. Quite silly and pointless all round, really. ★

LOGICAL
Rainbow Arts £19.99

Uppers – The ease of play makes this a nicely accessible puzzler. ***Downers*** – But the amount of time each move takes also makes it a seriously tedious one. ***The Bottom Line*** – In a crowded world of puzzle games, *Logical* is very blunt in the mustard area. ★★

LORD OF THE RINGS
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – A brilliant command system and excellent evocation of Tolkien's classic story. ***Downers*** – Everything is simply too slow and vast. Surely it could have been programmed better than this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Some great ideas, but the game just over-stretches itself. A shame. ★★★

LORDS OF CHAOS
Blade £24.99

Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equals great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

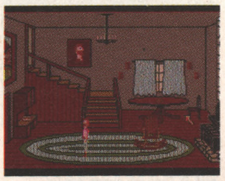
LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE II
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, lashings of speed and that hard-to-capture driving atmosphere. ***Downers*** – The lack of crashes is a bit silly, and some track maps would have helped. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best sprite-based driving game we've seen. ★★★★★

LUPO ALBERTO
Idea £25.53

Uppers – Charming characters, a terribly translated manual, and goofy gameplay make it ideal for kids of all ages. ***Downers*** – The animation is funny for all the wrong reasons. Loveable but really rather crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – A game sure to cause argument. A case of try before you buy. ★★

MADDOG WILLIAMS
Game Crafters £30.99



Uppers – It is possible to enjoy this game! ***Downers*** – Amateurish graphics surround very run-of-the-mill gameplay. Not the best Sierra-style adventure around by a long shot. ***The Bottom Line*** – There are much better ways of spending your money. ★★

MAGIC GARDEN
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – An outlandish (and gnomish) *Sim City*-ish kind of thing (sort of). ***Downers*** – Is there any demand for this sort of thing? ***The Bottom Line*** – For a game which is based around gardening, you just can't see the wood for the twee. ★★

MAGIC POCKETS
Renegade £25.99

Uppers – The usual Bitmap standards of technical excellence, and a veritable mountain of clever ideas. ***Downers*** – The graphics don't suit the game style, the design is too clever for its own good, and the pacing is hopelessly wrong. ***The Bottom Line*** – It'll sell a million, but everyone we've met finds it seriously boring. As a cute arcade platform game it's a disaster. ★★★

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE
Krisalis £25.99

Uppers – Fast, pretty, and hugely playable. ***Downers*** – The strategy section is largely superficial (and what there is is optional). ***Bottom Line*** – Great control makes this just about the best football sim so far. ★★★★

MAUPITI ISLAND
Lankhor £25.99

Uppers – Pleasantly different, with loads of character interaction. ***Downers*** – Just too small to really justify the price. ***Bottom Line*** – Charming and interesting, but there just isn't enough of it. ★★★

THE MED CONFLICT – BATTLESET 3
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – Arguably more exciting than earlier *Harpoon* scenarios. ***Downers*** – Very complex and specialist *Harpoon* data disks – only worth it if you're really into this type of game. ***The Bottom Line*** – A worthy addition for serious *Harpoon* fans. Obviously of no use for anyone else. ★★★

MEGA LO MANIA
Image Works £30.99

Uppers – Brilliant sound effects, gorgeous speech, jolly nice graphics, completely compulsive gameplay. It's up there with the likes of *Tetris* on the list of Most Addictive Games. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a tad frustrating at times. ***The Bottom Line*** – The most accessible and arguably the most enjoyable god-sim to date. ★★★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £30.64

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★

MERCENARY III
Novagen £29.99

Uppers – Six different solutions, lots to explore and plenty of plot. ***Downers*** – The 3D graphics couldn't look much more dated and the gameplay is thinner than the atmosphere on an asteroid. ***The Bottom Line*** – A rather average game, both in play and looks. ★★

METAL MUTANT
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – A simple concept (exploration, fighting and puzzle solving) which works well, and has a perfect difficulty curve. ***Downers*** – Lacks any really exciting features, and too simple for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A middle-of-the-road game, which achieves what it sets out to do, but doesn't really astound. ★★★

MICROPROSE GOLF
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Looks wonderful, and just about every conceivable variation of golf is covered. ***Downers*** – Seriously overpriced, can be a bit uninvolving, and the graphical 'fog' is unfortunate and disappointing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great golf game which just fails to match up to the standard set by *PGA Tour*. ★★★★

MIG-29M SUPER FULCRUM
Domark £39.99

Uppers – For the serious minded flight sim fans, *MiG29M* offers a superior trip, which manages to avoided cloning its predecessor. ***Downers*** – Way short of its competitors in areas such as ground detail and instant action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive, but fans of the original won't be disappointed. ★★★★

MOONSTONE
Mindscape £30.99

Uppers – Atmospheric visuals and sound effects create a spooky game world. ***Downers*** – There's not enough of anything. Awkward disk accessing breaks the flow of the game too. ***The Bottom Line*** – A simple, arguably mediocre game, hidden beneath glossy presentation. ★★★

MONOPOLY
Leisure Genius £19.99

Uppers – A faithful version of the classic (to say the least) board-game. ***Downers*** – Who the hell wants to play a board-game on their computer anyway? ***The Bottom Line*** –

Competently done, but arguably quite pointless. ★★

MONSTER BUSINESS
Eclipse £19.99

Uppers – Tons of character and classically simple *Dig Dug*-meets-*Snow Bros* gameplay make this endless fun for nostalgic arcade fans. Great music too, and a halfway-decent price tag. ***Downers*** – Once more, 'simple arcade fun' translates directly as 'shallow and transient kiddie rubbish' for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – A superb arcade platform game with more life in it than a hundred copies of *Magic Pockets*. ★★★★

MOONBASE
Mindscape £35.99

Uppers – Entertaining and addictive game in the best *Sim City* tradition. ***Downers*** – Just a bit too close to *Sim City* for comfort, though. ***Bottom Line*** – Fairly short-term entertainment, and more than a touch overpriced. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Erm, great hillbilly music. ***Downers*** – Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

NAVY SEALS
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – Quite good fun in a mindless arcade runaround sort of way. ***Downers*** – Technically unimpressive (to say the least), and there's very little to it. ***Bottom Line*** – Looks like an ST port, but if you can forget you paid £25 for it, it's pretty enjoyable. ★★

NAPOLEON 1
Internecine £29.99

Uppers – Historically accurate and all that kind of stuff – Boney fanatics will love it. ***Downers*** – ...but everyone else will be left completely cold. There's no attempt made to make the game accessible, it's purely for those who already know they're going to buy it before they ever see the thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you don't love the concept immediately, give this an extra-wide berth. ★★

NEBULUS 2 – POGO A-GO-GO
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

Uppers – The winning formula of the original is at the core of the game. ***Downers*** – The addition of power ups ruins the beautiful simplicity which made the first such a classic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A real waste. This is the worst kind of sequel – one which just regurgitates the ideas of its predecessor, but in a far less playable way. ★★

NECRONOM
Linel £25.99

Uppers – Behind all the technical boasting lies a groovy little blaster. ***Downers*** – It's not going to win any awards, and it's impossible without autofire. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad for real shoot-'em-up freaks. ★★★★

THE NEVERENDING STORY II
Linel £25.99

Uppers – There're several sub-games for your money, and the licence is ideal subject material. ***Downers*** – Exactly how not to do a film licence. ***The Bottom Line*** – You can do much better than this. ★★

OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS!
Psygnosis £25.99 (or £19.99 as an add-on for the original)

Uppers – The same classic game it always was. ***Downers*** – Where's the imagination that gave *Lemmings* its character in the first place? ***The Bottom Line*** – A missed opportunity, but still a brilliant game. ★★★★

ORK
Psygnosis £25.99

Uppers – *The Killing Game Show* revisited – which isn't such a bad thing. Packed with interesting gameplay extras, and no slouch in the graphics and animation stakes either. ***Downers*** – There's nothing new here at all. Very, very standard Psygnosis stuff. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing here to fire the imagination, but a slick, finely polished game nevertheless. ★★★

OUTRUN EUROPA
US Gold £24.95

Uppers – A vast improvement on earlier *OutRun* games, the use of different vehicles adding spice. ***Downers*** – The driving feel isn't as good as it might have been and the levels aren't sufficiently different. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class driving act, but its fails to compete with the likes of *Lotus II*. ★★★★

PACIFIC ISLANDS
Empire £29.99

Uppers – We can barely fault any aspect of this game. Brilliantly atmospheric and as epic as a very epic thing. ***Downers*** – It is a bit complex and the graphics aren't exactly sexy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Have a break from all those cute games, platformers, arcade adventures and RPGs. The first accessible tank-based wargame. ★★★★★

PANZER BATTLES
Strategic Studies Group £25.99

Uppers – Good fun for a wargame, with (fairly) bright and colourful graphics. ***Downers*** – Too many obscure icons. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good for prospective German tank drivers, a complete and utter load of twaddle for the rest of us. ★★★

PARASOL STARS
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Technically and aesthetically almost impossible to fault, and the two-player mode is inspirational. ***Downers*** – Doesn't have quite the same addictive hook as *Rainbow Islands*. ***The Bottom Line*** – This is a gorgeous arcade game right up at the top of the league, if perhaps not quite the universe-beater you were hoping for. ★★★★★

PGA GOLF COURSE DISK
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – Well, it's an add-on disk. You can't deny it gives you three new real life tournament courses for *PGA Tour Golf*. ***Downers*** – You can't really deny that's all there is to it either – the lack of new features to see, new control methods to try out (or anything else new at all really) is a bit of a disappointment. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'll have great fun with it if this is all you want. ★★★

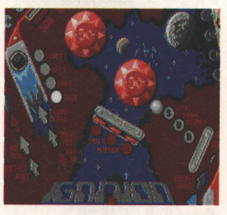
PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. ***Downers*** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. ***The Bottom Line*** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PEGASUS
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Two different genres for your money – *Rastan*-type slasher and *R-Type*-ish shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Neither game style is very well executed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unexciting and generally totally average game seriously lacking in character. ★★★

PINBALL DREAMS
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

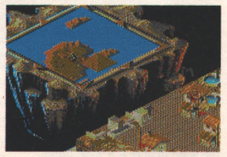


Uppers – Beautiful. Quite simply, the best pintable game seen on any console or computer. ***Downers*** – Well, it is only a pinball game – don't expect lots of variety to the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Top-notch silver ball action – pinball fans (and others too) will be playing this for years to come. ★★★★★

PIT-FIGHTER
Domark £24.99

Uppers – Interesting and distinctive looking beat-'em-up. ***Downers*** – The 3D effect and digitised sprites aren't entirely convincing, and gameplay is very shallow. ***The Bottom Line*** – A close conversion of a pretty thin arcade game. ★★

POPULOUS II
Electronic Arts £29.99



Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, more options and variety than before, and superbly paced action. ***Downers*** – It's really not all that different from the first game at all, more of a serious update than anything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – An absolutely wonderful game, the only flaw in which is the similarity to its predecessor. If you didn't buy *Populous*, though, don't even think about missing this. ★★★★★

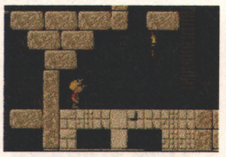
POPULOUS WORLD EDITOR
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – The ability to customise the classic *Populous* game. ***Downers*** – There's only really so much to be done with it. ***The Bottom Line*** – As far as game editors go, this one does the job well enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER: WW 1 EDITION
Electronic Arts £14.99

Uppers – *Powermonger* gets put into a real world context with this new data disk. Interesting new graphics. ***Downers*** – Most of the other gameplay changes appear to be essentially cosmetic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A smashing game, but *Powermonger* always got along fine without it. ★★★

PP HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON
Demonware £25.53



Uppers – Nicely old-fashioned platform action. Plenty of scope for double entrendres too. ***Downers*** – Annoying niggles and a tendency towards over-complication spoil it a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but it could easily have been a lot better. ★★★

PREHISTORIK
Titus £25.53

Uppers – Some excellent cartoon graphics and humorous touches make it an instantly likeable game. ***Downers*** – Suffers in comparison to *Toki* and *Chuck Rock*. Needs a number of rough edges polishing up. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough little caveman romp, but it's not really an essential purchase. ★★★

PROFLIGHT
Hi Soft £39.95

Uppers – Terrifyingly accurate – possibly the most accurate flight simulator ever. ***Downers*** – Such a good simulator that there isn't really room for any game at all. ***Bottom Line*** – Miles too realistic to be any fun to play. Still, it's less expensive than a real flying lesson. ★★

PROJECT X
Team 17 £25.99

Uppers – It looks and sounds undeniably beautiful. A real challenge. ***Downers*** – The insane, unfair difficulty level makes for one of the most frustrating games we've seen in ages. ***The Bottom Line*** – Addictive in the extreme, but not for the short of temper, or the shoot-'em-up novice. ★★★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

RACE DRIVIN'
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Great graphics and realistic driving action and the neat two-player option make this sufficiently different from its predecessor. ***Downers*** – The lastability of the actual game underneath is questionable. ***The Bottom Line*** – A smooth, well presented package. Although limited, it's undeniably fun. ★★★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE
Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you *do* get lots of disks for your money. ***Downers*** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, dreadfully-designed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the worst Amiga fantasy role-playing game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £29.99

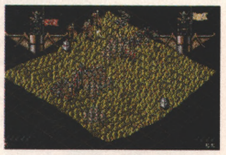
Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. ***Downers*** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. *Sim City* is still the better of the two, though. ★★★★

RBI TWO BASEBALL
Domark £29.99

Uppers – Excellent simulation of baseball, and beautifully presented to boot. ***Downers*** – Over-priced and not all that hot on lasting appeal.

Bottom Line – Very good, but a bit limited, and not quite a classic. ★★★★

REALMS
Virgin £29.99



Uppers – An interesting and slickly presented variation on the *Kingdoms* theme. The great battle sequences really make the game. ***Downers*** – There can be just too much routine realm-keeping. ***The Bottom Line*** – It'll take a little getting used to, but basically a terrific game. ★★★★

RED BARON
Dynamix £34.99

Uppers – WW1 flight sims are always appealing, and this one sounds great, packed with different viewpoints and options. ***Downers*** – Slow to the point of being unplayable. ***The Bottom Line*** – At the end of the day it plays like a brick. ★

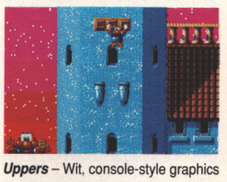
RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR
SSI/US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Military hardware a-go-go gives it instant RPG appeal. ***Downers*** – The strategy isn't deep enough, and the action sequences are way out of date. ***Bottom Line*** – Tales of galactic empires and warfare are a good idea, but this one just falls flat. ★

RISE OF THE DRAGON
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Atmospheric Blade Runner-style first-person adventure which combines digitised photos and comic-book presentation. ***Downers*** – Another hard drive game, and its not the most complex adventure ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, different and involving. ★★★★

ROBOCOD
Millennium £24.99



Uppers – Wit, console-style graphics and gameplay hide behind a barrage of visual jokes and puns. ***Downers*** – Perhaps it could have been a little 'tighter'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as impressive as *Rainbow Islands*! ★★★★★

ROBOCOP 3
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Some of the best 3D driving and shoot-'em-up action yet. ***Downers*** – Though large, there isn't as much here as a good number of 3D games. ***The Bottom Line*** –

Impressive and deservedly a great success. ★★★★★

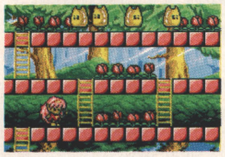
ROBIN HOOD
Millennium £25.99

Uppers – Witty and cheerful game that makes you love it almost in spite of itself. ***Downers*** – Tiny graphics can get irritating, and there are lots of silly little quirks. ***The Bottom Line*** – Likeable game that's a long way short of classic status, but damn good fun all the same. ★★★★

ROBOZONE
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Three totally different elements (*Killing Game Show* variant, *Dungeon Master* style sub-game, and *R-Type*-esque scroller) in one game... ***Downers*** – ...none of which are done at all well. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced, even if it had been released as a budget game (jolly nice front-end sequence though). ★

RODLAND
Storm £25.99



Uppers – Too-cute-to-be-true graphics, wonderful presentation, a near-perfect arcade game in the traditional sense. ***Downers*** – If you're looking for depth and complexity, look somewhere else. It sure is simplistic. ***The Bottom Line*** – A magnificent conversion that actually improves significantly on the original coin-op (no mean feat). Lovable and extremely addictive, you couldn't ask for a better platform arcade game. ★★★★★

ROLLING RONNY
Virgin £25.99

Uppers – Cute, console-style graphics and easy-to-grasp platform gameplay give *Ronny* instant appeal. ***Downers*** – Beneath the varnish lies not very much at all. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very plain game which offers nothing new to Amiga gamers. ★★

R-TYPE II
Activision £25.99

Uppers – 99 percent arcade-perfect, and a beautiful and addictive shoot-'em-up in its own right. ***Downers*** – A couple of tiny bugs irritate, and it's perhaps off-puttingly difficult. (For wimps, anyway). ***Bottom Line*** – The best space blast for the Amiga yet, and one of the best coin-ops conversion too. Superb. ★★★★★

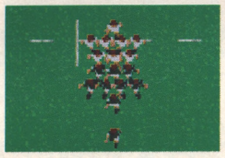
RUBICON
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

Uppers – It's got a lovely weapons system! ***Downers*** – The gameplay is very shallow and the rest of the game we've all seen before. It's blatantly unoriginal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up with no pain and no gain. The Joe Soap of shoot-'em-ups. ★★★

RUGBY COACH
D & H Games £24.99

Uppers – It makes a change from football coach games. ***Downers*** – But it's not exactly drastically different from them. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's nothing funadamentally wrong with it, except that it's a management game. ★★

RUGBY – THE WORLD CUP
Domark £25.99



Uppers – Fast, slick and frenetic action, and brilliant as a two-player game. ***Downers*** – Sacrifices a lot of realism in the quest for flowing play, like penalties for a start. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent rendition of the sport which puts playability before authenticity to great effect. ★★★★★

SARAKON
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Brilliant *Shanghai*-inspired gameplay make this a strategy classic, and the price is a bit of a nice surprise. ***Downers*** – Slightly indistinct symbols can occasionally confuse matters. ***The Bottom Line*** – A supremely addictive puzzler, in the finest 'takes over your entire life' tradition. ★★★★

SEARCH FOR THE KING
Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Superb Elvis gags and attention to detail (particularly in the lovingly-created graphics) mean graphic adventure fans will take to it immediately. ***Downers*** – Accolade blow it to a certain extent with their inefficient parser system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still a mighty long way to go before it competes with the likes of the mighty *Secret Of Monkey Island*. ★★★

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
US Gold £25.99

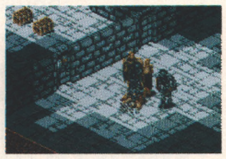
Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious (and very different) indeed. ***Downers*** – Despite the five disks, you'll still need

a full meg of ram, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Sheer software heaven. Destined for all-time classic status. ★★★★★

7 COLOURS
Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Interesting Othello-based concept. ***Downers*** – Useless documentation, terrible music, and relies too heavily on luck for a board game. ***The Bottom Line*** – More or less okay for the first few hours, but rapidly gets horribly boring. ★★

SHADOWLANDS
Domark £29.99



Uppers – An isometric 3D RPG game with a pleasant lack of statistics, some neat game design, and a 'revolutionary' light-and-darkness system, which actually manages to include whether you can see anything or not in the mechanics of the game. ***Downers*** – Rough graphics, minimal sound, crap scrolling – it's never going to compete with arcade games for instant kicks. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's not exactly fast, and it's not the best looking thing around, but a quick play will reveal that it's actually damn absorbing stuff. A winner, surprisingly. ★★★★

SHADOW SORCERER
US Gold £27.99

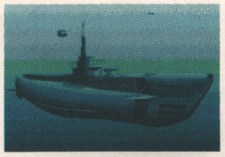
Uppers – Very different to the usual SSI orc-slashing fare. ***Downers*** – Disjointed plot and badly thought-out playing system means it never really gets going. ***The Bottom Line*** – Neither as playable as *Hero Quest* or as hardcore as *Eye Of The Beholder*, *Shadow Sorceror* falls uncomfortably between two stools. ★★★

SHANGHAI
Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SILENT SERVICE 2
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Engrossing and accurate simulation that could well take over your life. ***Downers*** – If you're not



into military strategy, this has little chance of changing your mind. ***The Bottom Line*** – All you sub fans (yes, you!) will know what to expect, so dive in. ★★★★

THE SIMPSONS
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A good licence AND a good game. Brilliant console-like scrolling arcade platform sort of thing. ***Downers*** – The main game doesn't really rely on the Simpsons theme, and a bit too complicated for Bart's younger fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – The licence of the year, quite probably. ★★★★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES
Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun being keelhauled. ★

SLIDERS
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Clean 3D isometric graphics, with loads of sporting and *Marble Madness* overtones thrown in for good measure. ***Downers*** – The result is frankly less enjoyable than it sounds. ***The Bottom Line*** – Buy yourself *Spindizzy Worlds* or *Speedball 2* instead. ★★

SMASH TV
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – At last – an Amiga version of the classic arcade game. ***Downers*** – It's a cut-down interpretation of the arcade original. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointment, but still a damn good game. ★★★★

SPACE 1889
Empire £30.99

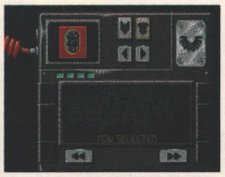
Uppers – Another fine game in the *MegaTraveller* mould, with a a wonderfully imaginative plot. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a touch too complicated and getting started is a pain. ***The Bottom Line*** – If it's your thing, then it's certainly worth a go. ★★★

SPACE ACE II – BORF'S REVENGE
Empire £34.99

Uppers – It looks pretty, and it's moderately entertaining for the first three minutes. ***Downers*** – You'll finish it inside three hours and you'll hate it so much you'll never want to see it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – Disjointed, ridiculously small, gameplay-free, stupendously priced, immensly frustrating. Complete trash. ★

SPACE CRUSADE
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – *Hero Quest* with a new setting, more strategy and assorted



tweaks. The level of strategy is real deep with a capital EEP. ***Downers*** – Disappointing sonics, and it be would be nice to see the on-screen figures pointing in the direction they're shooting. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great board game conversion. Highly recommended. ★★★★★

SPACE GUN
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Impressive looking *Operation Wolf* with aliens. ***Downers*** – Gameplay is hoplelessly old fashioned, limited and repetitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good conversion of a very limited arcade game. ★★★

SPACE QUEST IV
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – You can switch it off when you like. The packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Where do we start; the primitive 16-colour 'purple-and-grey-o-vision' graphics, the plodding storyline, the ages it takes for anything to load. A PC game that should never have been converted. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's very old fashioned and has an air of tiredness about it. Avoid. ★

SPECIAL FORCES
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Lots of scope to the scenarios and plenty of options in this new *Airborne Ranger*-style release. Will find its fans... ***Downers*** – ...but not here. Average graphics and complex controls make this a very expensive way to get only average kicks. ***The Bottom Line*** – Yet more proof that MicroProse should stick to straight sims. ★★★

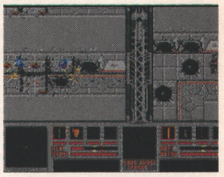
SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers*** – Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a few hours to kill while you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

SPOT
Leisure Genius £25.99

Uppers – Brilliantly-designed Othello-based board game which still manages to offer something new and different (and even supports up to four players). ***Downers*** – The presentation lacks polish in places. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class board-like strategy act. ★★★★★

STEEL EMPIRE
Millennium £29.99



Uppers – A decent blend of strategy and shoot-'em-up which generally works well. ***Downers*** – But boring graphics, rubbish sound and a lack of depth don't help things much. ***The Bottom Line*** – An enjoyable futuristic wargame, but a little too thin for comfort (particularly at this price point). ★★★

STELLAR 7
Dynamix (Sierra) £24.99

Uppers – Appealingly old-fashioned blast from the past in the form of (yet another!) up-dated *Battlezone*. ***Downers*** – Ever-so-slightly sluggish vector graphics and optimistic pricing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Satisfyingly mindless – but that's both a strength and a weakness. ★★

STEVE MCQUEEN WESTPHASER
Loriciels £25.99

Uppers – Almost reasonable graphics and some cute bits (it's possible to shoot the clothes off people!) ***Downers*** – Pretty hopeless shooting-gallery style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't even waste your time thinking about it. ★

STORM MASTER
Silmarils £25.99

Uppers – Well put together, easy to use, beautiful looking and very atmospheric multi-part *Kingdoms* variant. Need we say more? ***Downers*** – Oh, okay then. In some sections the gameplay just can't match up to the splendid effects. ***The Bottom Line*** – A mesmerising mix of slick animation, atmosphere and strategy makes for plenty of enjoyable play time. These French games sure are getting good now. ★★★★★

STRATEGO
Accolade £25.99

Uppers – An engaging strategy bash for one player at least, it adheres to the rules and appearance of the board game remarkably well. ***Downers*** – The fact that it can only be a one player game takes all the fun out of it. ***The Bottom Line*** – A fun board game which can never really work on computer. ★★

STRIKER MANAGER
D&H Games £24.99

Uppers – From the people who brought you *Football Director* (yes, that's its only good point). ***Downers*** – Statistic frenzy with absolutely no gameplay whatsoever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could push the boundaries of computer games backwards by ten years. ★

STRIP POKER DELUXE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – Can anybody think of any? We can't. ***Downers*** – The poker game is rubbish, the graphics are flickery and all the girls are ugly anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you want to see pictures of naked women there are better, cheaper and less sad ways of going about it. Utter trash. ★

STRIKE FLEET
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – Military freaks will enjoy the number of missions and the amazing array of hardware. ***Downers*** – Discerning gamers will be disappointed by the (ahem) shallow nature of the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really what we've come to expect from developers Lucasfilm. ★★★

SUPAPLEX
Dream Factory £25.99

Uppers – The *Boulder Dash* game style makes a comeback. ***Downers*** – But all the magic has been removed and the levels are poorly designed. ***The Bottom Line*** – There are half-a-dozen PD *Boulder Dash* games better than this. ★

SUPER SPACE INVADERS
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Brilliant intro and great sound. ***Downers*** – Incredibly slow, and closer in play to the original *Space Invaders* than the coin-op it's supposed to be a conversion of. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically inept and extremely disappointing version of one of the year's most enjoyable arcade shoot-'em-ups. ★★

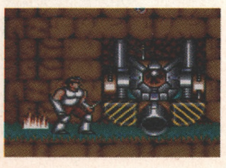
SUPER SKWEEK
Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – Cute *Defusion/Painter*-based game with power-ups and add-ons galore. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little to French for most of us. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could do with having another fiver chopped off the price, but otherwise great fun. ★★★

SWAP
Palace £25.99

Uppers – Interesting and new idea for a puzzle game, programmed perfectly competently. ***Downers*** – It just isn't captivating, and never rises above the averageness. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fails to inspire any emotions at all. It's not good, it's not bad. It's just a bit bland. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II
Gremlin £25.99



Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

SWORDS AND GALLEONS
Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair. ★★

TANGRAM
Thalion £25.53

Uppers – Perfectly adequate computer translation of the classic Oriental puzzle. ***Downers*** – ... unfortunately it's a really dumb idea for a conversion, and the extras (time limit and suchlike) are intrusive and pointless. ***Bottom Line*** – Getting a real wooden Tangram set would be more fun, as well as much cheaper. ★

THEIR FINEST MISSIONS
US Gold £15.99

Uppers – A handy missions disk for *Their Finest Hour*, sure to prolong game life. ***Downers*** – It's really only for lazy people who can't be bothered to construct their own missions with the editor in the original game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fine, but only if you've got the original (obviously). ★★★★

THUNDER BURNER
Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – It's nice(?) to see the *Afterburner* game style make a comeback, and there's a novel VCR facility. ***Downers*** – The game is fundamentally flawed. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly disappointing rubbish with no challenge whatsoever. ★

THUNDERJAWS
Domark £25.99

Uppers – Um...some quite nice cameo screens with cute babes. ***Downers*** – Crap graphics, crap sound, no gameplay and serious bugs. ***The Bottom Line*** – A poor-to-middling coin-op turns into an appalling Amiga game. A total waste of time and money. ★

TERMINATOR 2
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – You get exactly what you'll be expecting – Another Ocean Movie Licence With Lots Of Sub-Games And No Depth. ***Downers*** – Only one of the sub-games has any real merit of its own, and the rest are even worse than the norm for this kind of thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty hopeless run-of-the-mill effort for real diehard Arnie fans only. ★★

TILT
Genias £25.99

Uppers – A good puzzle game idea. ***Downers*** – Sadly the game itself just doesn't really work. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nice try, but something just isn't right and the gameplay's not there. ★★

TIP OFF
Anco £24.99

Uppers – Decent coaching option for those so inclined. It's also rather playable as an arcade game. ***Downers*** – The control isn't as intuitive as it should be. ***The Bottom Line*** – A decent (but uninspiring) simulation of basketball. ★★★

TITUS THE FOX
Titus £25.99

Uppers – Wonderful graphics, fabby toons and superbly designed levels – one of the cutest platform games yet. ***Downers*** – Loading can be a real pain and it all gets a bit too tough in places. ***The Bottom Line*** – A worthy successor to *The Blues Brothers*, although no great improvement. ★★★★★

TOKI
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – The (latest) definitive coin-op conversion. ***Downers*** – The sound is slightly disappointing, and the game is simply too small. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is brilliant, if only there was more of it. ★★★★★

TOP BANANA
Hex £25.99

Uppers – It's got lovely psychedelic 'acid' graphics, a dance soundtrack and environmentally friendly packaging. ***Downers*** – As a game, though, *Top Banana* fails to make the grade – *Rainbow Islands* did it all a hundred times better, and without acid pix. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scrappy and annoying. It's the Amiga's equivalant of The Word. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TURRICAN 2
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. Don't believe the hype. ★★★

ULTIMA VI
Mindscape £30.99

Uppers – With more depth than any other Amiga game around this is a role player's dream. ***Downers*** – The graphics are fairly rudimentary and the game is very slow in moving around, and a hard drive is a must. ***The Bottom Line*** – This is the cream of the hardcore role playing games, with the best gameplay and gameworld we've seen in the genre. ★★★★★

UNDER PRESSURE
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Well, if you like the look of Psygnosis games, you'll like the look of this. ***Downers*** – The execrable walk-and-shoot gameplay would bore a five-year-old. ***The Bottom Line*** – If it's supposed to be a joke, it's very funny. If it's supposed to be an enjoyable game for £26, it's a very bad joke. ★

UMS II
Rainbird (MicroProse) £34.99

Uppers – The pinnacle of tech-head wargames, with more user-definable bits than you could ever need. ***Downers*** – Atrocious documentation could mentally scar beginners for life. ***The Bottom Line*** – It won't win the wargaming fraternity any new members, but it'll put some in seventh heaven. ★★★

UTOPIA
Gremlin £29.99

Uppers – The appeal of this kind of city-building thing is timeless, and the war side gives it a new dimension. ***Downers*** – ...but neither side is particularly well-designed, and it can easily end up a touch on the dull side. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good game, but it needs a lot more depth to make it a true classic. ★★★★

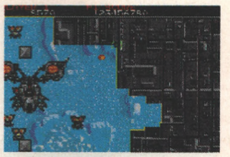
VENGEANCE OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £30.99

Uppers – An inspiring attempt at medieval adventure with some satisfactory visual presentation. ***Downers*** – Too much disk swapping and frustrating disk access time make it very slooooow. ***The Bottom Line*** – This RPG/strategy thing shares all the same faults and strengths as its predecessor, and on top of that it's not A500Plus compatible! ★★★

VIDEOKID
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Great sound, varied graphics and lots of action actually make this a groovy little zapper. ***Downers*** – Not entirely new in general, but (more specifically) isn't it just a bit too much like US Gold's *Mega Twins* for comfort? ***The Bottom Line*** – A decent, colourful little blaster. Ideal for the younger shoot-'em-up fan. ★★★

VOLFIED
Empire £25.99



Uppers – *Qix* was always a brilliant game, and this extremely close coin-op conversion adds to it without overwhelming it. ***Downers*** – Limited number of screens cuts down on its potential lifespan. ***The Bottom Line*** – A classic arcade game excellently converted, but you won't be playing it forever. ★★★

VROOM
Ubi Soft £25.99

Uppers – Very fast, stylish 3D racing sim with lots of game options and a two-machine link-up option. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too fast (!) to keep under control at times (not much of a complaint, we know). ***The Bottom Line*** – This is a winner all the way – perhaps the best all round driving game yet. ★★★★★

WHITE SHARKS
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

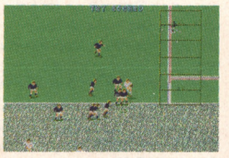
WILD WHEELS
Ocean £25.99

Uppers – Attractive presentation and competent programming make *Wild Wheels* an appealing prospect. ***Downers*** – The whole concept is remarkably shaky, and the finished result simply proves unplayable. ***The Bottom Line*** – More like *Mediocre Wheels*, really. ★★

WOLFCHILD
Core Design £25.99

Uppers – It looks good when it isn't moving too much, and the gameplay's a tried-and-trusted platform combat style. ***Downers*** – Very derivative of *Switchblade*, and the scrolling is a bit on the crude side. Most importantly though, it lacks any kind of spark. ***The Bottom Line*** – Initially quite good fun, but a rather half-hearted game. ★★★

WORLD CLASS RUGBY
Audiogenic £25.99



Uppers – The most accurate and technical representation of rugby we've seen. ***Downers*** – Unfortunately, the playability suffers, and the instant appeal is lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – It has its virtues, but it doesn't quite pull it off. Look to the updated *Five Nations* version instead. ★★★

WRECKERS
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Some refreshing game ideas add a new angle to the old 'aliens-overrun-space station' story. ***Downers*** – The whole thing feels far too much like an 8-bit game – right down to the colour schemes. ***The Bottom Line*** – All the elements of a good game are there – they just haven't been tied together properly. ★★

WWF WRESTLEMANIA
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – There aren't many, apart from the free video. ***Downers*** – There's a complete abscence of WWF's sparkle and a lack of fluid, stimulating grappling action. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's disappointment in store for grapple fans and WWF viewers alike. Come back Big Daddy, all is forgiven. ★★

ZONE WARRIOR
Electronic Arts £25.99

Uppers – Well, you don't see many games of this style anymore. ***Downers*** – But that's a bit of a blessing really. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even the programmers of this trashy arcade adventure must have been left with an empty feeling. Avoid it at all costs. ★

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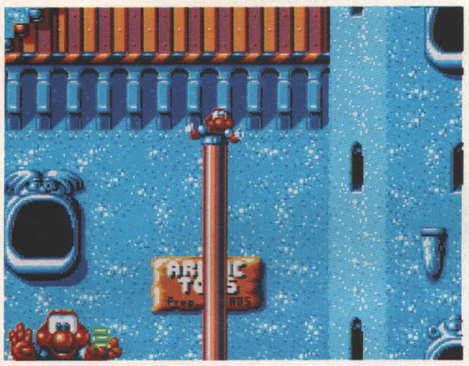


ROBOCOD

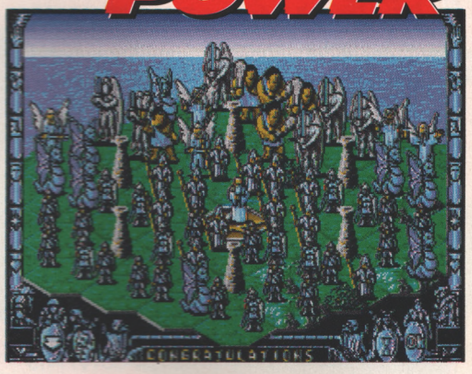
Many slick, fast arcade games are judged against the best 16-bit console stuff – *Robocod* is one that can actually stand such comparisons. Hilarious, original, superbly crafted, and if not quite as fast as *Sonic The Hedgehog*, pretty damn close, this is quite simply one of the best Amiga fun products of the past year. Superb!

AP rated 87 percent.

OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS

The stand-alone, you-don't-need-the-original-game-to-play-it, version of Psygnosis' *Lemmings* almost-sequel. It's the same superb game design as the original – just more of it! As an (expensive) data disk it earned 82 percent – this version would have rated far more.

AP rated (at least) 82 percent



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'Celtic' like the Northern European race, not 'Celtic' like the football team, this stunning strategy/action/role-playing game has proved a shock hit in the AMIGA POWER offices – fans of the *Chaos*-style of gameplay will love it! Especially fun in two-player mode, this unusual hex-based game with arcade dynamics is gorgeous, atmospheric and fun!

AP rated 89 percent.

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1 May 1991 Our very first issue! Big games like *Eye Of The Beholder, Gods* and *Cybercon III*, the first part of a gigantic *Rainbow Islands* player's guide, lots of chat from the Bitmap/Renegade crew and more!
On the disk: *Bombuzal* – the complete game!*

2 June 1991 And it just gets better! If you manage to get past the (ahem) swoony picture of Peter Molyneux on the cover you'll get to thrill to such treats as a giant Bullfrog interview and reviews of games like – yes! – *Monkey Island*!
On the disk: *Kid Gloves* – the complete game!

3 July 1991 You want to know about Core Design? CDTV? *F-15 Strike Eagle II*? *Deuteros*? *Toki*? Then this issue is the place to come! It's even got our first 'In The Style Of...' in it!
On the disk: brilliant *Exile* special world, *Prehistorik* preview, three typically excellent PD games!*

4 August 1991 The Ultimate Autumn Preview, film games, The Assembly Line interviewed, *Jimmy White's Snooker* reviewed and more!
On the disk: *Beast Busters, The Executioner* plus three PD games! **Plus!** Giant tips poster – *Kid Gloves* and *Bombuzal* solutions!*

5 September 1991 Giant Gremlin Work In Progress feature, all the new god sims compared, DMA Design talk *Lemmings, Mega lo Mania, The Simpsons, Thunderhawk* reviewed.
On the disk: *Barbarian II* demo, plus five (five!) great PD games!*

6 October 1991 *Indy Atlantis*, and more – giant US Gold Work In Progress feature, *Midwinter II, Cruise For A Corpse, Magic Pockets* reviewed.
On the disk: *Rolling Ronny, Captain Planet, Bullfrogger* and more!*
Plus! Five free AMIGA POWER postcards!

7 November 1991 *Monkey Island II, Young Indy Jones* – Lucasfilm tell all, World Of Commodore show, Bob Jacob of Cinemaware interviewed, *Formula 1 Grand Prix, Blues Brothers, Lotus II, Robocod* reviewed...
On the disk: *Leander, Video Kid*, plus PD games!*

8 December1991 All I want for Xmas... seasonal hardware guide, giant Xmas compilations feature, reviews coming out of our ears (*Populous II, First Samurai, Heimdall, MicroProse Golf, Knights Of The Sky*...)
On the disk: *Cisco Heat, Elvira Arcade* (1 meg), best of PD!*

9 January 1992 Giant FRP game feature, Code Masters interviewed, our Games Of The Year, reviews of *Smash TV, Birds Of Prey, Knightmare* and more!
Double disk issue! Giant *Knights Of The Sky* entire training section (1 meg), *Puggles* (great *Q-Bert*-style PD game).

10 February 1992 The Ultimate Spring Game Guide, If Graftgold had known then..., the best and worst of games packaging, plus reviews of *RoboCop 3, Another World, WWF, Leander* and much, much more!
On the disk: PD Special – featuring *Mr Wobbly Leg, Raid* and *Squamble*.

11 March 1992 The new Ocean – all the year's big previews, *Mega lo Mania II* – diary of a game starts, buyer's guide to platform games, plus reviews of *John Madden, Shadowlands, Harlequin*, and more!
On the disk: *Pacific Islands* exclusive mission, plus three PD games!

12 April 1992 Giant Psygnosis preview feature – all the new games, massive beat-'em-up buyer's guide, and some great games reviewed – *Parasol Stars, Titus The Fox, Vroom* and more!
Double disk issue! Great demos – *Titus The Fox, Project X*, plus *Rome* complete game and more!

13 May 1992 Bumper Anniversary Issue! Includes the new AP Top 100, hidden games guide, plus reviews of *Apidya, Project X, Ultima VI* and more!
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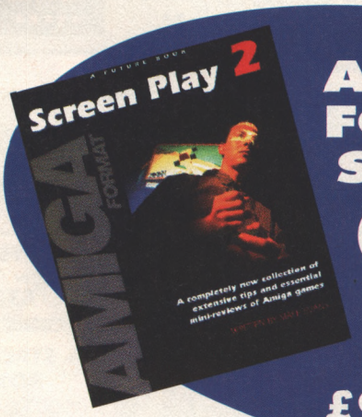

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POINTS OF VIEW

New! We each try to sum up the month's big games in four words (plus stars)! Ulp!

	ADDAMS	JOHN BARNES	FIRE & ICE	DELIVERANCE	PUSHOVER	LEGEND	SIMANT	DIZZY	FLOOR 13	BEHOLDER 2
MATT BIELBY	Excellent *Mario*-alike ★★★★★	Haven't played it	Fun, quirky – a grower ★★★★★	Bold but scrappy ★★★	Fun but no world beater ★★★	A real step forward ★★★★★	Ambitious but dull ★★	Great value, bags of fun ★★★★	Great idea, OK execution ★★★	Could be better? ★★★★★
MARK RAMSHAW	An idea-free zone ★★★	Fast & frantic but fiddly ★★★	Platform perfection ★★★★★	Kinda neat, but limited ★★★	A software snack ★★★★	Like, most excellent ★★★★★	*SimBore*, more like ★	My head is spinning ★	Definitely worth a try ★★★	Superb, but nothing new ★★★★
STUART CAMPBELL	Fun, but nothing new ★★★★★	Tiny pitch, no scope ★★★	Bare and a bit slow ★★★★	*Gods* with some colour ★★★	Fun for ten screens ★★★	Clever and accessible ★★★★★	Hang the programmer ★	Varied, vibrant, VFM ★★★★	Real and a bit scary ★★★★★	Seen it all before ★★★
GARY PENN	Good, but not great ★★★★	Sensible do it better ★★★	Luvverly jubberly! ★★★★★	Haven't played it	Haven't played it	An FRP I *like*! ★★★★★	Yawn. Not much fun ★	Hate to admit it but ★★★	Interesting, but text based ★★★	*Another* FRP I like!! ★★★★★
MATTHEW SQUIRES	Average, little more ★★★★	Fine, but lacks depth ★★★	Nice ice! ★★★	Fabby graphics ★★★★	Limited playability ★★★	Shrewd and stylish ★★★★★	Sad ant game ★	Great fun, but simple ★★★★★	Chilling atmosphere ★★★	Haven't played it

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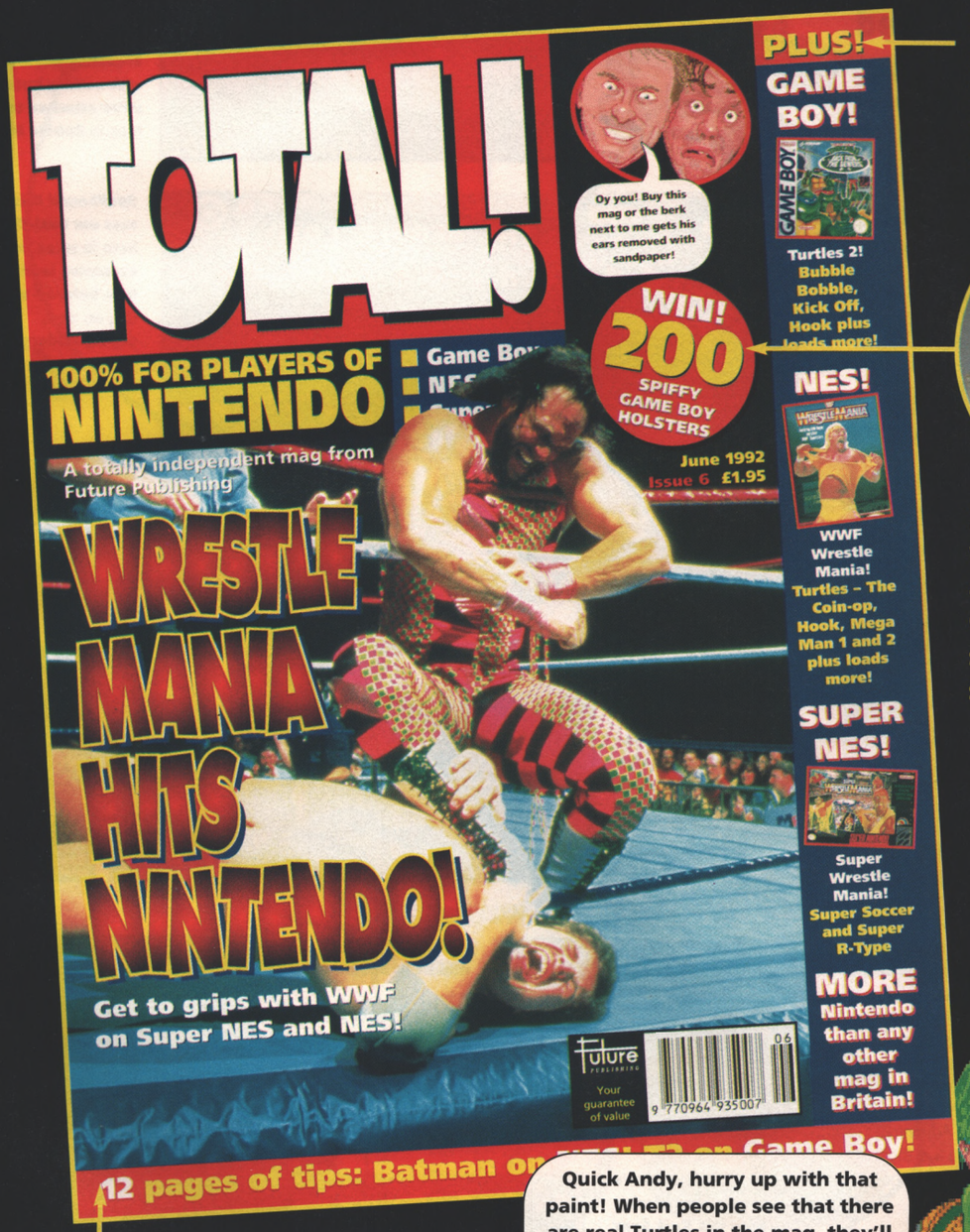

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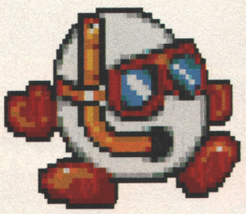
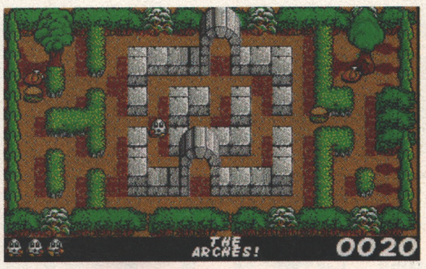
No 4 amiga UNIVERSE

DIZZY



Hurrah! At last we've reached the biggest hero of them all...

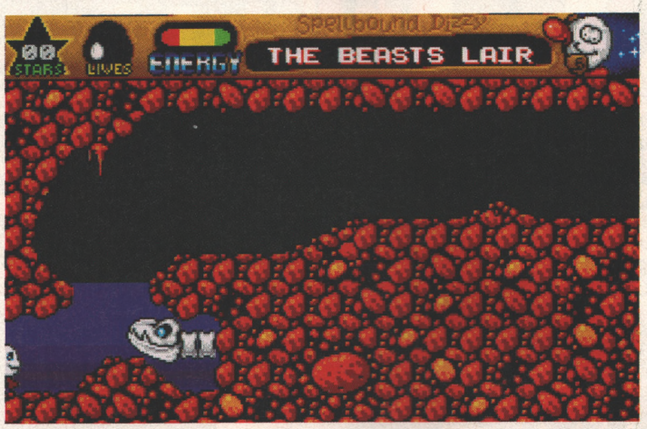


Left: Simple *Pac-Man*-type maze fun in *Fast Food*.

Far left: Diz performs the unlikely feat of breathing underwater with nothing but a straw attached to his face in *Bubble Dizzy*.

DIZZY

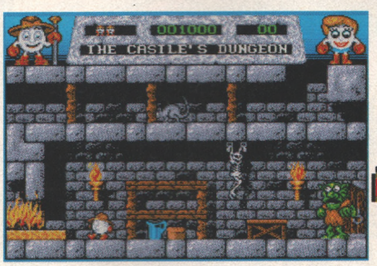
FULL NAME Dizzy.
OCCUPATION Explorer/adventurer/general Indiana Jones type.
LEGAL STATUS As a living egg, Dizzy occupies a strange and unique position in law. While he's clearly a fully-formed and independently-sustainable life form, his technical embryonic status leaves him lacking in formal legal rights.
MARITAL STATUS Single, but very closely attached to a female egg character by the name of Daisy. Sources close to the couple speculate that marriage is highly likely in the near future.
KNOWN RELATIVES AND ASSOCIATES Daisy, Denzil, Dozy, Dora, Dylan and Grand Dizzy, collectively known as the Yolk Folk, and also the good wizard Theodore.
ADVERSARIES Dizzy's nemesis is the wizard Zaks, who regularly kidnaps various members of the Yolk Folk or perpetrates some other random injustice on them, which Dizzy must put to rights. In *Treasure Island Dizzy* and *Bubble Dizzy*, Dizzy's enemy is the pirate Captain Blackheart, and other lesser opponents crop up from time to time.
AGE In *Dizzy Prince Of The Yolk Folk*, Dizzy's given task is to 'wake Daisy from her hundred year snooze', so it would seem to be somewhere in excess of a century. Officially though, Dizzy has just passed his fifth birthday.
DISTINGUISHING FEATURES Dizzy can be identified by the bright red boxing gloves he always wears, and by the somersaulting jumping technique utilised in all his (non-arcade) games.
BASE OF OPERATIONS The home of the Yolk Folk is their tree house in Zakeria, although various games involve the characters in numerous other regions of Fantasy World.
FIRST APPEARANCE Dizzy's debut on the Amiga came in *Treasure Island Dizzy*, although he had previously appeared as the eponymous hero of *Dizzy* on various 8-bit machines.
HISTORY After *Treasure Island Dizzy*, Dizzy's next appearance was in *Fantasy World Dizzy*, which also marked the debut of the Yolk Folk. Next was *Fast Food*, which was Dizzy's first departure from cartoon arcade adventures into a pure arcade-style game. *Magicland Dizzy* (currently only available on the *Dizzy Collection*) returned to the original formula, but was followed by a thematic sequel to *Fast Food*, *Kwik Snax*, which was a puzzle game with arcade overtones. Then came a veritable avalanche of new titles, with an arcade game (*Bubble Dizzy*), a puzzler (*Panic Dizzy*) and two new adventures (*Spellbound Dizzy* and the less formulaic *Dizzy Prince Of The Yolk Folk*) all released at once as part of *Dizzy's Excellent Adventures*.
HEIGHT Unstated, we assume it to be around four to five inches.
WEIGHT Unstated, but probably between one and three ounces.
EYES Large, white with small black pupils.
HAIR None.
STRENGTH LEVEL Fairly low, though Dizzy can carry reasonably heavy objects in most games. He can also survive falls of any length, but is vulnerable to fire and water and the touch of almost any enemy.
KNOWN ABILITIES As well as his somersaulting and swimming underwater with the aid of a snorkel, Dizzy has recently perfected a new trick, the pirouette jump seen in *Prince Of The Yolk Folk*. Otherwise, he's pretty much limited to the usual egg tricks of rolling down hills and, er, that's it.
PARAPHERNALIA Dizzy's only other notable feature is his physical development over the course of his games. From the *Treasure Island* beginnings of an almost featureless face, he's grown a nose and a proper mouth with teeth and varying expressions, as well as occasionally donning an Indy-type hat for that extra touch of style.
NEXT APPEARANCE The Amiga version of the original *Dizzy*.

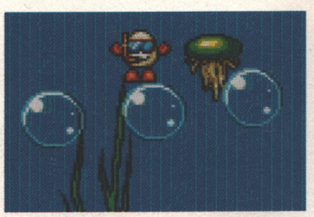


Spellbound Dizzy sees our oval-shaped hero in some more expansive landscapes than before – witness the, er, vast, gaping wilderness of this section of 'The Beast's Lair'...

Far right: Indiana Dizzy steps out in *Fantasy World*, complete with eyebrows, pupils, detailed mouth and floppy hat.

Right: A tricky puzzle to solve (– not!)

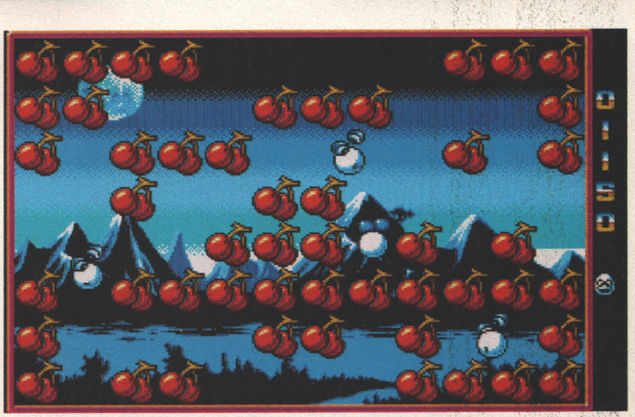




Left: Watching the wildlife in *Bubble Dizzy*.

Right: Meet the Yolk Folk (L-R) Dylan, Dizzy, Daisy and Dozy. Can you tell how they got their names?

Hmm. There's something missing from this *Kwik Snax* screenshot, I'm sure of it. Let's see... Mountains? Check. Cherries? Check. Bad guys? Check. Dizzy? Er...



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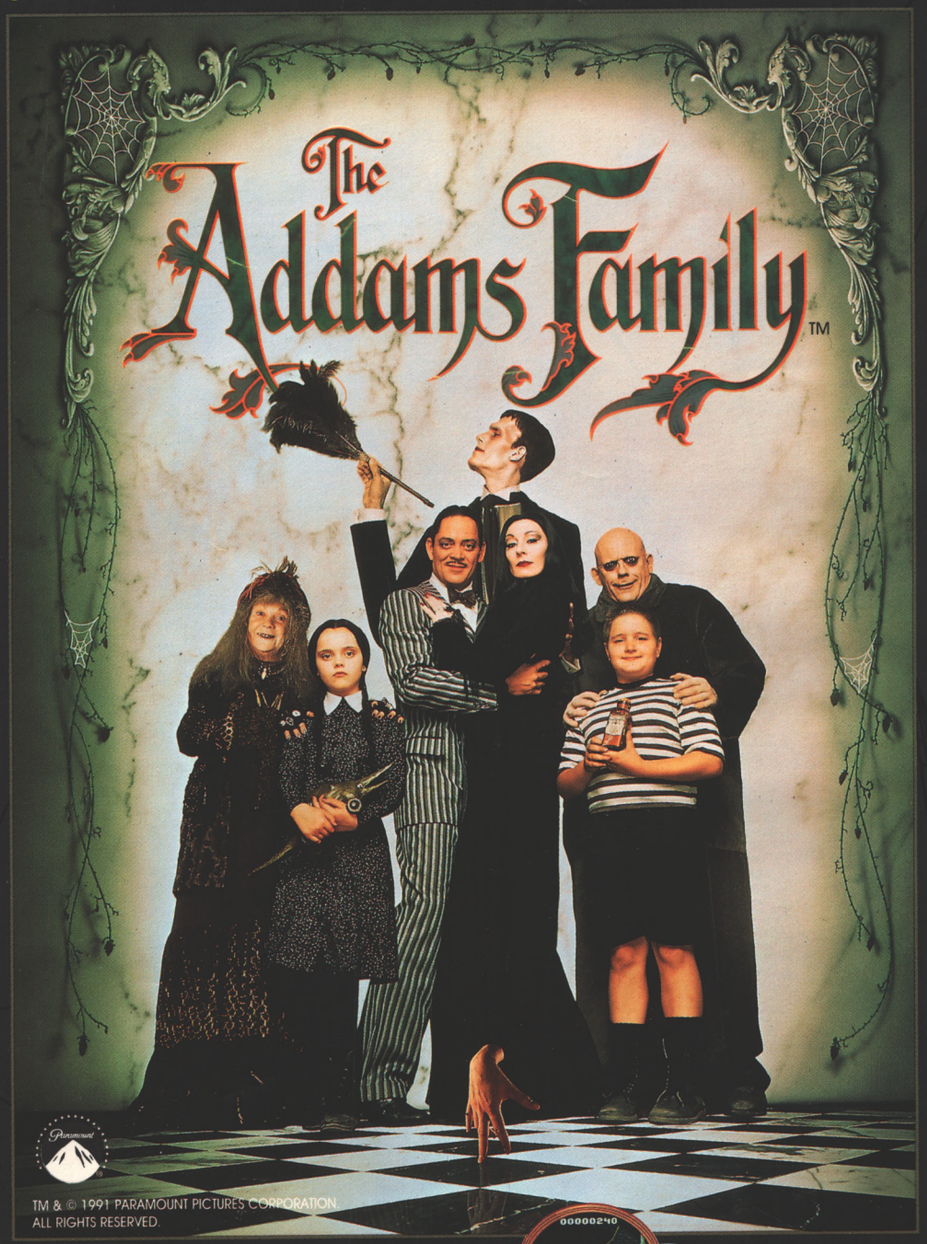

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Reviewed next month: The Perfect General – *at last, a sexy wargame?*

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Reviewed next month: The Perfect General – at last, a sexy wargame?

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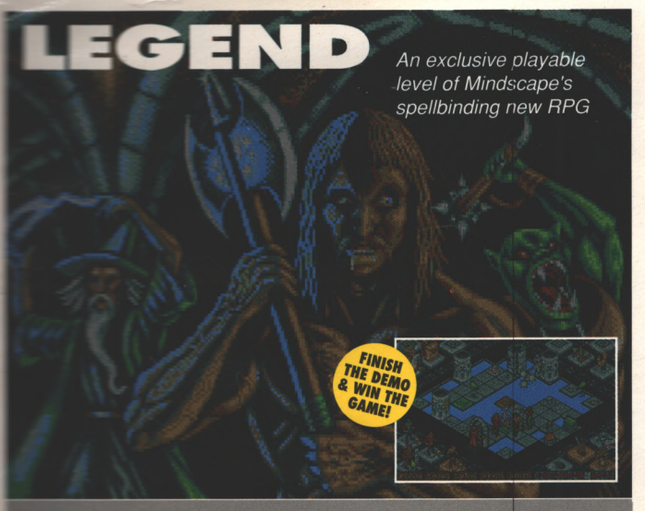

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